

SELF-PUBLIC PLANNING VILLA 31

The public space as a social place that does not exist
inside the house

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To my family.

"When you lose sight of your dreams, you die"

Marjetica Potrc

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ABSTRACT

“Spontaneity is the origin of all cities” (Jorge Lestard, 2012).

Villa 31 is the protagonist of this research: a shanty town located in an area of greatest conflict of Buenos Aires, Argentina, the boundary between the interchange area of infrastructure, the financial district and the area with the highest real estate price.

The thesis traces the story of the slum, starting from its ancestor the *conventillo* until the contemporary *villas*, its evolution, its conflicts and its urban and social policies applied through the years. A general picture is made of what is urban poverty and urban segregation, and how poor habitats in the major cities of Latin America have developed. Through the data collected and the brief social analysis produced, made possible by interviews conducted on the inhabitants of Villa 31 the purpose of the present work was to understand the past and present dynamics of this place, the projects that are aimed at the upgrading of the neighbourhood and the techniques on which it can be supported a proposal in order to achieve a successful action. The principles of tactical urbanism are explained and pursued to serve as the methodology to follow to develop the solution.

Sit in the train from Tigre to Retiro station there is a dad with his son sitting behind me. The father is describing to the boy the characteristics of every monuments, parks, buildings, public spaces that we saw through our eyes as we move fast with the train: the big racecourse, the famous football stadium, the prestigious university. When the convoy is approaching to the station, two minutes left for the final stop, we started to see the Villa 31 infesting the edge of the railroad tracks, the bottom of the elevated highway, the port; and suddenly the dad became quiet, he stopped to talk and he shifts the focus of the child on the other side of the train on advertising signs. We arrive, we get off the train, we are in the city of Buenos Aires. Continue to ignore something pretending that it does not exist is not the solution to the “problem”.

Small interventions can change the way of living of the *villeros* and the *villa's* reputation to the blind eyes of the inhabitants of the city of Buenos Aires. The creation of public spaces usually is a way to gather people, break the limit, open a space.

“Individuals prefer to live with people who are at least as rich as themselves” (Goyal and Ghiglinio, 2010).

KEY WORDS: Villa 31, urban poverty, tactical urbanism, public space, urban planning.

RESUMEN

“La espontaneidad es el origen de todas las ciudades” (Jorge Lestard, 2012).

La Villa 31 es la protagonista de esta investigación: localizada en un área de gran conflicto de Buenos Aires, Argentina; en el límite entre la zona de intercambio de infraestructuras, el distrito financiero y la zona con el más alto valor de propiedad inmueble.

La tesis traza su historia: desde su antepasado, el conventillo, hasta llegar a las contemporáneas villas, su evolución, sus conflictos y sus políticas urbanas y sociales aplicadas a través los años. Se hace un cuadro general de lo que es la pobreza urbana y la segregación urbana, y como se han desarrollado en las mayores ciudades de Latinoamérica. A través de los datos recogidos y del breve análisis social producido, hecho posible por las entrevistas realizadas a los habitantes de la Villa 31, la intención del presente trabajo es comprender la dinámica pasada y presente de este lugar, los proyectos que se proponen para mejorar el barrio y las técnicas sobre las que se puede apoyar una propuesta para lograr una acción exitosa. Los principios del urbanismo táctico son explicados y perseguidos para servir como la metodología a seguir para desarrollar la solución.

Mientras viajo en el tren que recorre de la estación de Tigre a la estación de Retiro, un papá con su hijo dialogan sentados detrás de mí. El padre está describiendo al niño las características de todos los monumentos, los parques, los edificios, los espacios públicos que vemos a través de nuestros ojos en cuanto avanzamos rápidamente con el tren: el gran hipódromo, la famosa cancha de fútbol, la prestigiosa universidad. Cuando el tren se acerca a la estación, a dos minutos de la parada final, empezamos a ver la Villa 31 infestando el borde de las vías del ferrocarril, el bajo de la autopista elevada y el puerto. De repente, el papá se quedó quieto, paró de hablar, y llevó la atención del hijo para el otro lado del tren; hacia los carteles publicitarios. Llegamos, bajamos del tren: estamos en la ciudad de Buenos Aires. Ignorar algo, pretender que no existe, no es la solución al “problema”.

Pequeñas intervenciones pueden cambiar la manera de vivir de los villeros y la reputación de la villa a los ojos ciegos de los habitantes de la ciudad de Buenos Aires. La creación de un espacio público generalmente es la forma de reunir gente, romper el límite, abrir un espacio.

“Los individuos prefieren vivir con personas que son por al menos tan ricas cuanto ellas” (Goyal and Ghiglino, 2010).

PALABRAS CLAVE: Villa 31, pobreza urbana, urbanismo táctico, espacio público, urbanismo.

RESUMO

"A espontaneidade é a origem de todas as cidades" (Jorge Lestard, 2012).

A Villa 31 é a protagonista desta pesquisa: um “bairro de lata” localizado numa área de grande conflito de Buenos Aires, Argentina, a fronteira entre a área de intercâmbio de infraestrutura, o distrito financeiro e a área com o maior preço imobiliário.

A tese traça a história do “bairro de lata”, a partir do seu antepassado o *conventillo* até as *villas* contemporâneas, a sua evolução, os seus conflitos e as políticas urbanas e sociais aplicadas ao longo dos anos. É apresentada uma imagem geral do que é a pobreza e a segregação urbana, e como os habitats pobres nas principais cidades da América Latina se desenvolveram. Através dos dados coligidos e da breve análise social produzida, possibilitada pelas entrevistas realizadas com os habitantes da Villa 31, o objetivo do presente trabalho foi compreender as dinâmicas do passado e do presente deste lugar, os projetos destinados a renovar o bairro e as técnicas em que pode ser apoiada uma proposta de sucesso. Os princípios do urbanismo tático são explicados e desenvolvidos para servirem como metodologia a desenvolver tendo em vista a solução.

Sentada no comboio de Tigre para a estação de Retiro, há um pai com o filho sentado atrás de mim. O pai descreve ao menino as características de todos os monumentos, parques, edifícios, espaços públicos que vimos através dos nossos olhos, enquanto avançamos com o comboio: o grande hipódromo, o famoso estádio de futebol, a prestigiosa universidade. Quando o comboio se aproxima da estação, dois minutos antes da paragem final, começamos a ver a Villa 31 a infestar os limites dos trilhos ferroviários, a parte inferior da rodovia elevada, o porto; e de repente o pai ficou em silêncio, parou de falar e deslocou a atenção da criança para o outro lado do comboio para as placas publicitárias. Chegámos, saímos do trem, estamos na cidade de Buenos Aires. Continuar a ignorar algo, fingir que não existe não é a solução do "problema".

Considera-se que pequenas intervenções podem mudar o modo de viver dos *villeros* e a reputação da *villa* aos olhos “cegos” dos habitantes da cidade de Buenos Aires. A criação de espaços públicos é reconhecida, geralmente, como uma forma de reunir pessoas, quebrar o limite, abrir um espaço.

"Os indivíduos preferem viver com pessoas que são pelo menos tão ricas quanto elas mesmas" (Goyal e Ghiglino, 2010).

PALAVRAS CHAVE: Villa 31, pobreza urbana, urbanismo tático, espaço público, planeamento urbano.

DEDICATION

To the pillars of my life: my father, my mother, and my grandmother. Without you, my entity would fall apart, without your love and understanding I would not be able to make it, thanks for your faith in me, and for teaching me that I should never surrender.

Without poetry, there is no city.

Il sole bacia la mia bocca,

la pioggia accarezza i miei occhi.

Le mie braccia si agitano verso la luce sopra la mia testa,

i miei piedi cercano stabilità nelle profondità della terra.

Il sole bacia la mia bocca,

la pioggia accarezza i miei occhi.

I miei capelli seguono il ritmo del vento,

il mio ventre si riempie di vita ad ogni respiro.

Il sole bacia la mia bocca,

la pioggia accarezza i miei occhi.

Le mie orecchie accolgono il nido di chi ancora deve nascere,

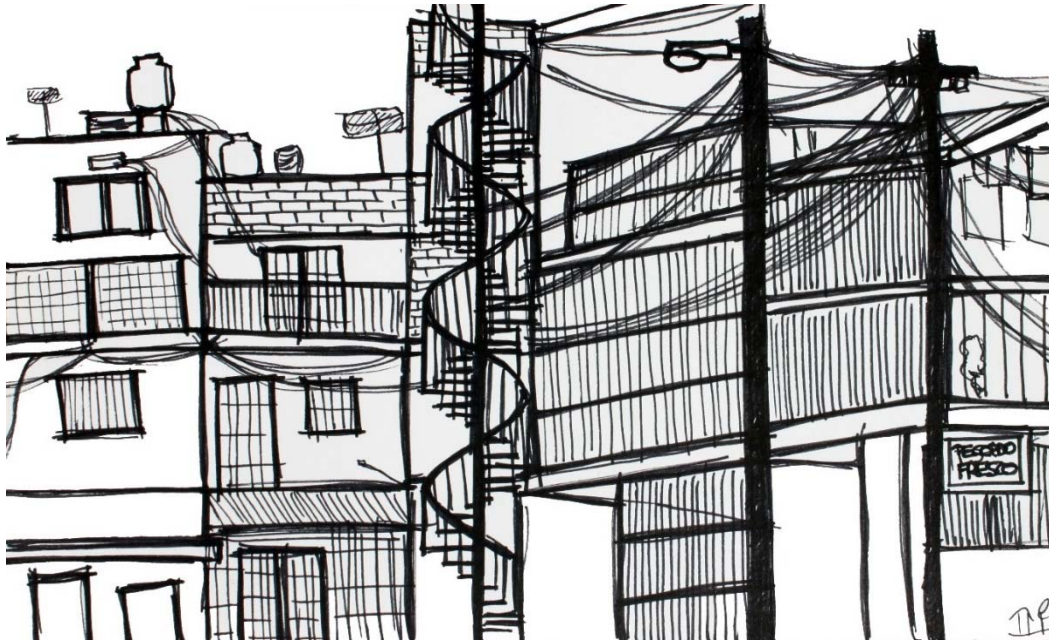
il mio ombelico segue il ritmo della linfa che scorre nelle mie vene.

Il sole riscalda il mio cuore,

la pioggia nutre il mio corpo.

Apro gli occhi, e la rugiada del mattino abbandona i miei bianchi fiori che riflettono il tuo sorriso.

(Elena Parnisari, 2017)¹



1. Sketch of Villa 31, Elena Parnisari

¹ *The sun kisses my mouth, the rain caresses my eyes. My arms are flapping towards the light above my head, my feet are seeking for stability in the depth of the earth.*

The sun kisses my mouth, the rain caresses my eyes. My hair follow the rhythm of the wind, my belly is full of life with every breath.

The sun kisses my mouth, the rain caresses my eyes. My ears welcome the nest of those yet to born, my belly button follows the rhythm of the sap that flows in my veins.

The sun warms my heart, the rain feeds my body. I open my eyes, and the morning dew leaves my white flowers that reflect your smile.

GENERAL INDEX

ACKNOWLEDGMENT	i
ABSTRACT	iii
RESUMEN	v
RESUMO	vii
DEDICATION	ix
GENERAL INDEX	xi
FIGURE INDEX	xv
TABLE INDEX	xxiii
ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS	xxv

1. INTRODUCTION.....1

2. OBSERVE..... 7

2.1. THE CONCEPT OF URBAN POVERTY 7

2.1.1. POVERTY IN LATIN AMERICA..... 10

2.1.2. POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT IN ARGENTINA..... 12

2.2. URBAN SEGREGATION 14

2.2.1. THE INFORMAL CITY 18

2.3. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE POOR HOUSING AREAS OF ARGENTINE CITIES 21

2.3.1. THE *CONVENTILLO*..... 22

2.3.2. THE *VILLA MISERIA*..... 25

2.3.3. ERADICATION OF THE VILLAS	28
3. INFORM	31
3.1. VILLA 31	32
3.1.1. THE SECTORS.....	37
3.1.2. THE EVOLUTION	38
3.1.3. URBAN AND SOCIAL POLICIES APPLIED IN VILLA 31	44
3.1.4. ANALYSIS MAPS	50
3.2. PEOPLE: OCCUPANTS AND TENANTS	56
3.2.1. DATA.....	58
4. ACT	61
4.1. METHODOLOGIES FOR PARTICIPATIVE SPACES	62
4.1.1. METHODOLOGIES FOR VILLAS	63
4.2. LANDSCAPE AND PUBLIC SPACE	64
4.3. PRINCIPLES FOR PRACTICE	66
4.4. TACTICAL URBANISM	68
5. DEMONSTRATE	73
5.1. EXAMPLES OF SOLUTIONS IN SOUTH AMERICA	73
5.1.1. LUZ NAS VIELAS, BOA MISTURA, 2012. BRAZIL, SÃO PAULO	74
5.1.2. METROCABLE, URBAN DEVELOPMENT ENTERPRISE, 2004. COLOMBIA, MEDELLÍN	78
5.1.3. LA PLAZA DE NUESTRO SUEÑOS, LUKAS FUSTER, 2014. PARAGUAY, REMANSITO.....	80

5.1.4. VERTICAL GYM, ALFREDO BRILLEMBOURG, 2004. VENEZUELA, CARACAS	82
6. PARTICIPATE	87
6.1. EXISTING URBAN DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR VILLA 31	87
6.1.1. "TREINTA Y TODOS" URBANIZATION VILLA 31, GOVERNMENT OF BUENOS AIRES	89
6.1.2. PRELIMINARY URBAN PROJECT BARRIO 31 CARLOS MÚGICA, ARCH. JAVIER FERNANDEZ CASTRO	94
6.1.3. VILLA 31 SOCIO-SPATIAL STRUCTURING PROJECT, ARCH. JORGE MARIO JAUREGUI	98
6.1.4. EXISTING PROPOSALS ASSESSMENT	101
6.2. LISTENING TO VOICES FROM INSIDE: THE INHABITANTS OF BUENOS AIRES SPEAK	103
6.3. URBAN INTERVENTION BUENOS AIRES 31, WORKSHOP RUA.....	108
6.4. PROPOSAL AND PLANS.....	113
6.4.1. CRITICAL ISSUES	115
6.4.2. STRATEGY OF INTERVENTION	125
6.4.3. IDEAS.....	126
6.4.4. THE CONCEPT	128
7. CONCLUSION	139
REFERENCES.....	143
APPENDIXES	151
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	195

FIGURE INDEX

Fig.1 – Sketch of Villa 31, Buenos Aires. Elena Parnisari	X
Fig.2 - Lithography Villa 31, Buenos Aires. Retrieved 24 April 2017, from.....	3
Fig.3 - Summary table of levels of poverty reached in Argentina between 1990s and 2016, Elena Parnisari.....	13
Fig.4 - Slum Jose Leon Suarez, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Habitat for humanity. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from http://www.habitatni.co.uk/blog/let-us-walk-outside-our-comfort-zone/	14
Fig.5 - Gentrification: the city as a field of appropriation, dislocation and segregation, Paraisopolis, Sao Paulo, Brazil. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from http://autonomies.org/pt/2015/05/gentrification-the-city-as-a-field-of-appropriation-dislocation-and-segregation/	15
Fig.6 - Google earth image of the Ciudad Evita, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Retrieved 3 May 2017, from http://www.listao.com.ar/2014/04/las-provincias-y-ciudades-argentinas-que-no-sabes-que-existieron/#.WQmm0tryiHs	20
Fig.7 - Courtyard of a Conventillo with its inhabitants, 1907, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Educ.ar. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from https://www.educ.ar/recursos/84441/conventillos	23
Fig.8 - El Conventillo de Don Nicola, 1939, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Héctor L. Torino. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from http://pulperiaquilapan.com/tu-cuna-fue-un-conventillo/	25
Fig.9 - Villa Miseria, Villa 31, 1933, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from http://www.cafedelasciudades.com.ar/cultura_122.htm	26
Fig.10 - Eradication of Villa 31, 1979, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from http://www.revistaharoldo.com.ar/nota.php?id=44	29
Fig.11 - Villa 31 aerial view, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Arquitectura 4, Catedra Pedemonte. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from http://gonzalezpedemonte4.blogspot.com.ar/2015/08/barrio-31-vista-aerea-360.html	32
Fig.12 – Map of CABA, Ciudad Autonoma de Buenos Aires, Elena Parnisari	33

Fig.13 – Contextualization map of Villa 31 in Buenos Aires, Elena Parnisari	33
Fig.14 - Aerial view from google maps, Retrieved 16 December 2016.	34
Fig.15 - Entrance of the Villa 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 5 December 2016.	36
Fig.16 - Villa 31, 2016, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from http://www.infobae.com/fotos/2016/06/28/19-fotos-del-megaoperativo-antinarco-en-la-villa-31/	36
Fig.17 - Sector Autopista, Villa 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 5 December 2016.	38
Fig.18 - Historical evolution of Villa 31 from 1940 to 1995. Retrieved 3 May 2017, from Fernández Castro, J. (2010). <i>Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza</i> (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana.	42
Fig.19 - Historical evolution of Villa 31 from 2000 to 2008. Retrieved 3 May 2017, from Fernández Castro, J. (2010). <i>Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza</i> (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana.	43
Fig.20 – Evolution map of Villa 31. Elena Parnisari.	44
Fig.21 – Urban and social politics map of Villa 31. Elena Parnisari.	50
Fig.22 – Built space plan of Villa 31, annex 1 for the real scale. Elena Parnisari.	51
Fig.23 – Empty space plan of Villa 31, annex 2 for the real scale. Elena Parnisari.	51
Fig.24 – Green spaces and empty squares plan of Villa 31, annex 3 for the real scale. Elena Parnisari..	52
Fig.25 – Arterial roads around Villa 31. Retrieved 23 May 2017, from http://www.atlasofurbanexpansion.org/cities/view/Buenos_Aires	53
Fig.26 – Infrastructure plan of Villa 31, annex 4 for the real scale. Elena Parnisari.	53
Fig.27 – Sectors plan of Villa 31, annex 5 for the real scale. Elena Parnisari.	54
Fig.28 - The spiral stairs of Villa 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Retrieved 19 April 2017, from http://www.monicagutierrez.com.ar/otros/ de la villa al barrio proyecto treinta y todos 1728	55

Fig.29 - Street market inside of Villa 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 5 December 2016.	56
Fig.30 - Tactical urbanism polka-dotted project, Chicago, USA. Antonio Perez. Retrieved 3 March 2017, from http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/ct-people-street-kamin-met-0702-20150703-column.html	68
Fig.31 - Oakville tactical urbanism. Robinson & George. Retrieved 3 March 2017, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EFmAUHrZ1E	69
Fig.32 - The umbrella sky project, Agueda, Portugal. Sextafeira Produções. Retrieved 3 March 2017, from http://eud.leneurbanity.com/tactical-urbanism-movement/	71
Fig.33 - Luz Nas Vuelas, São Paulo, Brazil. Boa Mistura. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from http://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/cl/02-162852/luz-nas-vuelas-de-bo-a-mistura/captura-de-pantalla-2012-06-10-a-las-9-51-41	75
Fig.34 - Luz Nas Vuelas, São Paulo, Brazil. Boa Mistura. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from http://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/cl/02-162852/luz-nas-vuelas-de-bo-a-mistura/captura-de-pantalla-2012-06-10-a-las-9-51-41	76
Fig.35 - Luz Nas Vuelas, São Paulo, Brazil. Boa Mistura. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from http://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/cl/02-162852/luz-nas-vuelas-de-bo-a-mistura/captura-de-pantalla-2012-06-10-a-las-9-51-41	77
Fig.36 - Medellin Metro cable Linea J, Medellin, Colombia. Steven Dale. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from http://gondolaproject.com/medellin/	78
Fig.37 - The Metro cable over top the Santo Domingo barrio, Medellin, Colombia. Steven Dale. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from http://gondolaproject.com/category/installations/medellin-metrocable/	79
Fig.38 - La Plaza de Nuestros Sueños – Lukas Fuster, Remansito, Paraguay. Federico Cairoli. Retrieved 3 March 2017, from http://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/cl/763176/la-plaza-de-nuestros-suenos-lukas-fuster	81
Fig.39 - La Plaza de Nuestros Sueños – Lukas Fuster, Remansito, Paraguay. Federico Cairoli. Retrieved 3 March 2017, from http://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/cl/763176/la-plaza-de-nuestros-suenos-lukas-fuster	82

Fig.40 - Vertical Gym in Venezuela, Caracas, Venezuela. Urban-Think Tank. Retrieved 3 March 2017, from http://architizer.com/projects/vertical-gym-in-venezuela/	83
Fig.41 - Vertical Gym San Agustin, Caracas, Venezuela. Urban-Think Tank. Retrieved 3 March 2017, from https://gimnasiovertical.wordpress.com/vertical-gym-projects/vertical-gym-san-agustin/	84
Fig.42 - Vertical Gym Chacao, Caracas, Venezuela. Iwan Baan. Retrieved 3 March 2017, from http://utt.com/project/vertical-gym/	85
Fig.43 - Sketch of a fragment of Villa 31, Buenos Aires. Retrieved 24 April 2017 from https://www.behance.net/gallery/36536789/Fragmento-VILLA-31	89
Fig.44 - Masterplan Treinta y Todos project. Retrieved 19 April 2017, from http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2016/08/30/argentina/1472565308_299661.html	92
Fig.45 - The Linear Park of Villa 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Retrieved 19 April 2017, from http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2016/08/30/argentina/1472565308_299661.html	93
Fig.46 - Comparison table between urbanization and eradication. Retrieved 24 April 2017, from Fernández Castro, J. (2010). <i>Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza.</i>	95
Fig.47 - Masterplan Barrio 31, Javier Fernandez Castro. Retrieved 24 April 2017, from http://www.observatorioamba.org/planes-y-proyectos/caba/proyectos/proyecto-urbano-barrio-31-carlos-mugica/ficha	96
Fig.48 - Rendering project Barrio 31, Javier Fernández Castro. Retrieved 24 April 2017, from http://www.observatorioamba.org/planes-y-proyectos/caba/proyectos/proyecto-urbano-barrio-31-carlos-mugica/ficha	98
Fig.49 - Villa 31 Socio-Spatial Structuring Project, Jorge Mario Jauregui. Retrieved 19 April 2017, from http://www.jauregui.arq.br/villa31.html	100
Fig.50 - Urban and Social Structuring Plan, Jorge Mario Jauregui. Retrieved 19 April 2017, from http://www.jauregui.arq.br/villa31.html	101
Fig.51 – Pillar with a sign advertising in the middle of a soccer field in Villa 31, Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 3 December 2016.....	107
Fig.52 - Logo of the workshop RUA, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Samira Proeza.	108

Fig.53 - Map of the place of intervention, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari.	109
Fig.54 - Google street view of the place of intervention, Train station Retiro San Martin. Retrieved 20 March 2017, from https://www.google.it/maps/@-34.5893681,-58.3727292,235m/data=!3m1!1e3	110
Fig.55 - Flyer urban intervention Buenos Aires 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 8 December 2016.	110
Fig.56 - Urban intervention Buenos Aires 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 11 December 2016.	111
Fig.57– Villa 31 sectors plan, annex 6 for the real scale, Elena Parnisari	114
Fig.58 – Villa 31 spatial plan, annex 7 for the real scale, Elena Parnisari	115
Fig.59 – Villa 31 photos plan, annex 8 for the real scale, Elena Parnisari	116
Fig.60 – Highway Illia and the houses of Villa 31, google street view. Retrived 9 May 2017	117
Fig.61 – Highway Illia and the houses of Villa 31: view of an empty space, google street view. Retrived 9 May 2017	117
Fig.62 – Houses built under the highway, google street view. Retrived 9 May 2017	118
Fig.63 – Attachment of houses to the highway, google street view. Retrived 9 May 2017	119
Fig.64 –Houses and streets built under the highway, google street view. Retrived 9 May 2017	120
Fig.65 – Little tree in a square of Villa 31, Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 8 December 2016	121
Fig.66 –Parking lots inside an empty space of Villa 31, google street view. Retrived 9 May 2017	122
Fig.67 – View of Villa 31 from Libertador Avenue, Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 5 December 2016 ...	123
Fig.68 – View of Villa 31 from the platforms of Retiro train station, Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 7 March 2017	124
Fig.69 – Limit between Villa 31 and the platform of Retiro train station, Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 7 March 2017	124
Fig.70 – Villa 31 streets network plan, annex 9 for the real scale, Elena Parnisari	130

Fig.71 – Villa 31 connections plan, annex 10 for the real scale, Elena Parnisari	130
Fig.72 – Concept: workshops of imaginaries, sketch by Elena Parnisari.	131
Fig.73 – Footbridge connection, sketch by Elena Parnisari.	132
Fig.74 – Villa 31 concept plan, annex 11 for the real scale, Elena Parnisari	133
Fig.75 – Photomontage of a new public space in Villa 31, Elena Parnisari.	134
Fig.76 – Photomontage of the new concept of streets in Villa 31, Elena Parnisari.	135
Fig.77 – Section of Autopista sector, Elena Parnisari.	135
Fig.78 – Touristic map of Buenos Aires, Elena Parnisari.	136
Fig.79 - Interview with Abel Alegre, 24 March 2017, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 24 March 2017.	151
Fig.80 - Interview with Adriana Duprez, 20 March 2017, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 20 March 2017.	154
Fig.81 - Interview with Angelina Aguilera Penayo, 30 March 2017, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 30 March 2017.	157
Fig.82 - Interview with Atenas Oviedo, 14 March 2017, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 14 March 2017.	160
Fig.83 - Interview with César Armando Molas, 16 March 2017, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 16 March 2017.	163
Fig.84 - Interview with Elsa Amada Méndez, 30 March 2017, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 30 March 2017.	166
Fig.85 - Interview with Esteban Paiva Samudio, 16 March 2017, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 16 March 2017.	169
Fig.86 - Interview with Guillermo Cristofani, 29 March 2017, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 29 March 2017.	172

Fig.87 - Interview with Gustavo Capri, 30 March 2017, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 30 March 2017.	175
Fig.88 - Interview with Juan Esteban Balestretti, 13 March 2017, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 13 March 2017.	179
Fig.89 - Interview with Laura Milan Candido, 25 March 2017, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 25 March 2017.	182
Fig.90 - Interview with Lourdes Rocio Villalba, 24 March 2017, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 24 March 2017.	185
Fig.91 - Interview with Mathilde Roux, 13 March 2017, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 13 March 2017.	188
Fig.92 - Interview with Teresa Liliana Barreto Villalba, 16 March 2017, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari. Photo taken 16 March 2017.	191

TABLE INDEX

Table 1 - Built space plan, scale 1:5000. Villa 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari, 5 January 2017.

Table 2 - Empty space plan, scale 1:5000. Villa 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari, 5 January 2017.

Table 3 - Green spaces and empty squares plan, scale 1:5000. Villa 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari, 10 January 2017.

Table 4 - Infrastructure plan, scale 1:5000. Villa 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari, 11 January 2017.

Table 5 - Sectors plan, scale 1:5000. Villa 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari, 8 January 2017.

Table 6 - Villa 31 sectors plan, scale 1:5000. Villa 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari, 16 May 2017.

Table 7 - Villa 31 spatial plan, scale 1:5000. Villa 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari, 15 May 2017.

Table 8 - Villa 31 photos plan, scale 1:5000. Villa 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari, 5 June 2017.

Table 9 - Villa 31 streets network plan, scale 1:5000. Villa 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari, 5 June 2017.

Table 10 - Villa 31 connections plan, scale 1:2000. Villa 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari, 15 May 2017.

Table 11 - Villa 31 concept plan, scale 1:1000. Villa 31, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Elena Parnisari, 26 May 2017.

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

AAA	Alianza Anticomunista Argentina _ Anti-Communist Alliance Argentina
ADIF	Administración de Infraestructuras Ferroviarias _ Administration of Railway Infrastructures
CABA	Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires _ Autonomous City of Buenos Aires
CBA	Canasta Básica Alimentar _ Minimum Food Basket
CBT	Canasta Básica Total _ Total Food Basket
CCFC	Fondo Cristiano Canadiense para la Niñez _ Canadian Christian Fund for Children
CGT	Confederación General del Trabajo _ General Confederation of Labour
EPH	Encuesta Permanente de Hogares _ Permanent Household Survey
FADU	Facultad de Arquitectura, Diseño y Urbanismo _ Faculty of Architecture, Design and Urbanism of the University of Buenos Aires
FEDEVI	Federación de Villas y Barrios Carenciados _ Federation of Marginalized Villas, Nuclei and Neighbourhoods
INDEC	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos _ National Institute of Statistics and Censuses
IVC	Instituto de Vivienda de la CABA _ Institute of Housing of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires
JUNALD	Junta Nacional Para Combatir la Desocupación _ National Council to Combat the Unemployment
MVBC	Movimiento de Villas y Barrios Carenciados _ Movements of Villas and Poor Neighbourhoods
NHT	Núcleos Habitacionales Transitorios _ Transient Housing Nuclei

ONABE	Organismo Nacional de Administración de Bienes del Estado _ National Agency for the Administration of State Property
PE	Plan de Emergencia _ Emergency Plan
PEVE	Plan de Erradicación de Villas de Emergencia _ Eradication Slums Plan
PROSUR	Programa de Regularización y Ordenamiento del Suelo Urbano _ Regularization and Urban Land Management Program
PUI	Proyecto Urbano Integral _ Integral Urban Project of Medellin City in Colombia
RUA	Arte, Intervención y Resistencia Urbana _ Art, Intervention and Urban Resistance

1

INTRODUCTION

“Las villas miseria son parte de la vida de la ciudad, parte de su fuerza laboral. Aun cuando la ciudad quiera verse blanca, bonita, pulida, moderna y eficiente y aun cuando pretenda quitarse de encima el problema de las villas” (Blaustein, 2001).²

The inspiration that brought me to start this research about the public spaces of Villa 31, a slum in Buenos Aires, Argentina, comes from an experience that I had almost 3 years ago in Brasil, where I went after my bachelor's graduation for a solo trip. I wanted to explore South America since a long time, not as a tourist, but to experience that reality as a local, I wanted to be involved in activities that could help me to feel the vibes of that land unknown to me. I remember well the shock that I had when I saw for the first time a *favela*, so different from what I knew until that time here in Europe. It attracted me at first sight; I thought that it was incredible that people themselves had built their own houses, their own neighbourhoods, brick after brick. I went against the recommendations of the locals to don't go there, because it could be dangerous, and with my complete trust in human kindness that always helped me to experience more and more in my life, guided from confidence, I went everyday closer and closer to this new reality that fascinated me.

When one night with the group of capoeira with whom I was training, we went for a *roda*³ inside the *favela* Vila Brasilândia in São Paulo I reached a turning point in my life. Capoeira for definition is a sport, a dance, a fight that you play all together usually on the street, on a square, on the beach, generally in an open space, but that time we were playing it inside of a house; I felt strange about that decision,

² *“The shanty towns are part of the city's life, part of its workforce. Even when the city wants to look white, beautiful, polished, modern and efficient and even when it tries to get rid of the problem of the villas”.*

³ Literally it means circle. *Roda* is the expression to define an exhibition of capoeira, where everyone is on a circle, waiting to play in the middle.

but then I realized that actually, outside there was no space for us to stay, the condition of the pavement was not good and the inhabitants were scared to stay out of their doors at night. This episode made me open my eyes and watch things more carefully, I realised which was the big difference between the formal city and the informal one: not the well-maintained facades of the buildings replaced by bricks, but the gardens, the squares, the promenades and the playgrounds replaced by nothing, just empty narrow spaces with no use.

The reason why I define this episode a turning point of my life is because I was in that period, after my bachelor's graduation and on the verge of choosing what to do next, for which master apply, and there I realised I wanted to learn what happens in a city outside of the house, which are the features that compose the space that people experience every day on the exterior of their home. I wanted to focus my architecture studies not anymore just on the house, but on the contrary, on spaces that are not restricted to walls. It is unquestionable sure that I started this master in spatial planning at University of Porto, with the idea to finish it by turning this personal experience that I had few months before into something real.

After a year learning about urban planning and focusing my attention on the importance of the public space, as a system built for the people and not only for the city itself, as a space made for interactions, and contacts of people living together; it came by itself the focus of the research that would convert into this thesis, on this major topic of the urbanization of the public space.

I chose to go again in South America to develop my studies for the same reason why I went there for the first time: the excitement for the Latin mentality and the opportunity to study the issue of urban poverty. However, this time I chose Argentina firstly because of family affects, since my grandmother, teacher of life, spent a big part of her life there and I always wanted to follow her footsteps, and secondly because I found a master that I could attend, as exchange student, at the University of Buenos Aires "Habitat and urban poverty in Latina America", that I considered the best way to complete my master studies. After I started to attend this course, and being involved in the argentine dynamics, with the help of my teachers there I chose to focus my attention on the case of Villa 31, since its characteristics struck me instantly: its location, its history, its development, its resistance and its importance in the slum scenario of the city of Buenos Aires.

I could say that the starting point of my dissertation finds its origin in "Favelas, Learning from", Lotus 143⁴, where a general overview about the theory of slum and its examples all around the world from

⁴ Lotus. (2010). *Favelas, Learning from*. Lotus International, 143.

South America, to Africa, to India and a great reference to “The planet of slum” by Mike Davis are presented. The art of precariousness and the thriving on adversity that drove people to be the proponents of their own space stimulates me to know more and more about this theme and to understand how to contribute to the improvement of these places, where people themselves are their real infrastructures, without disturbing the genuine nature of the slum.

“Thus, the cities of the future, rather than being made out of glass and steel as envisioned by earlier generations of urbanists, are instead largely constructed out of crude brick, straw, recycled plastic, cement blocks, and scrap wood. Instead of cities of light soaring toward heaven, much of the twenty-first-century urban world squats in squalor, surrounded by pollution, excrement, and decay.” (Davis, 2006).

The present study focuses on the case of urban poverty in Argentina, particularly Buenos Aires, converging in the reasons that explain the occupation of these territories. It is intended to understand how these processes happened in history, what are the social and urban policies developed for these situations, and to see some examples of solutions for poor neighbourhoods in Latin America. From this knowledge, the research will then focus the attention on one of the *villas* (shanty town/slums) of Buenos Aires. In this sense, it is also intended to study the projects that already exist for the redevelopment and rehabilitation of the *villas*, and starting from them to make a proposal based on the data acquired in the research. The investigation will be focused on the use, the existence, the project and the importance of public spaces in the poor habitats of Latin America.



2. Lithography of Villa 31, Buenos Aires.

The concept behind the work is tactical urbanism: planning strategies for public spaces that bring the socialization environment outside of the house. Therefore, it is important to consider two spheres of awareness: first the self-housing processes and second the autonomous management of the public space using simple strategies, temporary solutions, which admit continuous change and evolution.

The central objective of this research is to contribute to the urbanization and requalification of the urban areas of poverty, and by starting from this wide topic to focus the thesis on the urbanization of the public space. With this subject is intended to move the attention on the anthropological, social and critical side of architecture. That's also the reason that explains the title presented "The public space as a social place that does not exist inside the house". It is expected that this line of research will permit to understand which are the factors that attract people to a specific place, what they need to enjoy this place, and how their voices can be heard.

If one thinks about a city with no public spaces one imagines a place where people circulate, move around and just stop when they reach their houses or their working places, this is a dystopian city, with no places for people to stop, to sit, to talk, to rest, to think. Well, this is usually what is happening inside of the poorest neighbourhoods: the house represents the central core and no attention is posed on what there is outside; no attention is posed by the public administration or by the investors, but the residents are using it a lot even if they don't have the conditions and quality of use. What happens inside of a dormitory neighbourhood, happens inside of a slum. As social animals, people need public spaces to share with the other, people deserve to enjoy the outside as much as the inside, people need the confront with the other, and to do this people need a place where to feel comfortable to stay.

This investigation aims at understanding and realizing a theory on the management of public spaces in poor areas, to appreciate the processes and actions that can establish the ways to create meeting points in these territories with difficulties and to rehabilitate these spaces, in the simplest and fastest way possible. Considering the importance of a place that does not exist inside the house but complements it, the public space is envisioned as an extension of the house. With this work, it is intended to demonstrate that the public space, being a place of interaction for everyone, is the privileged intervention area for the project in these poor territories. It is the one that most easily combines the expectations of different actors and allows shared actions in favour of a common and consensual urban qualification.

The work started with a bibliography review of the authors that have already studied the case of urban poverty in Argentina and specifically the area of Villa 31; most of them are South American architects, sociologists and political experts. The seminars and classes attended at Universidad de Buenos Aires in the master "Hábitat y pobreza urbana en América Latina" helped to enrich the information about the

topic, and to understand the several dimensions that constitute its reality. The work produced by the Professor and Architect Javier Fernandez Castro “Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica”, from the Architecture Department was used as a starting point for all the research.

After the bibliography research, an empirical interpretation was done, by experiencing the place and by making practical studies that helped to have a personal opinion on the area of study and also aided to focus the research on an understanding that considers the social issues. The interviews that were conducted on a small group of people, both from Villa 31 and various neighbourhoods of Buenos Aires were perhaps the biggest help, to understand how the *villa* is seen, what it represents, what is missing and which are the needs of the people that inhabit it. In fact, interviews have been conducted to understand the problematic closely and to give voice to those who will undergo changes at their home place. This empirical and social analysis helped to formulate some proposals resulting from the voices of people and not focusing merely on the archetypical aspects that compose a public space.

The thesis is structured into 5 parts, according to the meaning of 5 different verbs: observe, inform, act, demonstrate and participate. The sequence of these words aims at creating a logical connection throughout the research development and help to anticipate and explain the issues that will be dealt with. The first part is “observe”, to examine, to learn about the historical background, what was done and why, how the process of the informal settlements started and how it evolved; the second part is “inform”, to know the facts and the situation, a social, political and data analysis is conducted to have a base on which to start the work; the third part is “act”, to take action, to discuss the methodologies and techniques developed, an introduction on the topic of tactical urbanism is done in order to understand how to apply this concept to the area of study; the fourth part is “demonstrate” referring to the experiments and models produced to adapt to the project, four project are presented to show different ways of action; the fifth and last part is “participate”, reporting the case study, the voices of the people, the personal experience and the project proposal.

As for the writing of the thesis methodology, when personal experiences and the sensations generated by a particular context are described, in addition to the criticisms and comments generated by the comparison of the projects and the different realities, the text is written using the first-person singular to emphasize the empirical nature of the comments and to signal a change of perspective with respect to the scientific information. In a research aimed at making people artisans and protagonists of a change, with the goal of understanding the dynamics of a particular situation through listening to them, it is equally important my personal involvement in facts and thoughts. Whenever the text reflects my opinion and is therefore less well founded, writing uses the first-person singular to stand out from the rest of the research that is based on facts and references.

The research also proposes a more human vision on this topic, focusing on the social aspect of the problem and on the feelings and demands of those who live in Villa 31. The work wants to highlight the concept of development and consequent improvement that has to be spontaneous, made for people and by the people themselves, with the help of the government that has to act as a social actor and not as an obstacle.

The final aim of this project is to recognize innovative and sustainable design tactics that are on display in slums, and to show that the improvement of the public spaces of a poor neighbourhood of a city promotes its integration into the common urban scenario, reduces the feeling of insecurity and improves the interpersonal relationships of the inhabitants. Furthermore, it is intended to demonstrate that listening to people helps to propose and create solutions personalised to their needs, with less risk of failure and greater success in the result.

2

OBSERVE

Observe: to watch carefully the way something happens or the way someone does something, especially in order to learn more about it.

Before facing the issue concerning the re-urbanization of the *villas* of Buenos Aires it is necessary to know the historical background from which this phenomenon arises. Therefore, one must study the model that history offers us to understand what has been done and why, to be able to move in the right direction following the footsteps of those that before us have acted in a similar way; and also learn from what has gone wrong. One should look at the past, examine it carefully and consider it wisely for the future development proposals.

In this chapter, it will be presented the historical formation and transformation of the slums of the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina. It will be explained how this phenomenon started in order to define briefly the case study of the thesis. Besides, by understanding the historical evolution of the poor areas, it will be enlightened the concept of urban poverty in Latin American cities.

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF URBAN POVERTY

“As the world’s urban population grows, so too does the population of the urban poor. Of the three billion urban residents in the world today, one billion live in slums, vulnerable to disease, violence, and social, political, and economic exclusion” (Beall & Fox, 2006).

A single definition of poverty cannot be given; no conceptualisation or measurement can be assumed of it. In the 1960s poverty could be defined as marginalization and social exclusion; between the 1970s

and the 1980s as a livelihood strategy and the definition of poverty incorporated variables such as access to housing, basic infrastructure, health and education; between the 1990s and the 2000s as a social vulnerability when the studies began to look at the cost of the calories needed by individuals and to define poverty based on minimum food intakes (the food basket). Nowadays poverty is a multidimensional issue: deprivation or unequal access to material resources and rights; material deprivation and symbolic and subjective deprivation; low access to health services, to education, and to decent work; no access to fundamental human rights (basic services, goods). The definition of poverty includes lack of capabilities and freedom, and addresses the multiple sources of deprivation that poor households experience.

There are two macro distinctions of poverty: relative poverty and absolute poverty. For the first one the scale of values is associated with a lifestyle, the important thing is the social context *“people are relatively deprived if they cannot obtain the conditions of life - that is the diets, amenities, standards and services – which allow them to play the roles, participate in the relationships and follow the customary behaviour which is expected of them by virtue of their membership of society”* (Wratten, 1995); the second one involves human dignity and the universality of basic human rights. The method of calculating poverty can be direct, measuring the satisfaction of basic needs or indirect, when household income is compared to the value of a poverty line.⁵

“Most definitions associate poverty with a lack or deficiency of the necessities required for human survival and welfare. However, there is no consensus about what basic human needs are or how they can be identified” (Wratten, 1995). People are classified as poor when their income is less than that required to meet certain defined needs.

In 1980 in Europe people started to talk about the concept of the new poverty because of the huge increase in unemployment: from 2,4% in 1973 to 11% in 1989. In twelve European countries between 1975 and 1980 the number of poor increased from 3,6 million to 39,5 million, and continue to grow until it reached 43,9 million in 1985⁶.

⁵ The poverty line is the aggregate value of all goods and services considered necessary to meet the basic household needs.

⁶ Kessler, G. & Di Virgilio, M. (2008) *La nueva pobreza urbana: dinámica global, regional y argentina en las últimas dos décadas*. Revista De La Cepal, p. 34.

The phenomenon of poverty and its definition has changed during history, as it was mentioned before. Until 1950 only those unable to work were considered poor and needy, but this definition has grown to include all the people that were living in miserable conditions regardless of their ability to work.

In Argentina, the poor is the one that deserves to be assisted and that lives in certain neighbourhoods of the city, while the "*villero*" (inhabitants of the Buenos Aires slum: *villa*) is a poor defamed, who lives in a marginalized place of poor quality, without urban planning.⁷

Indeed, the presence of a large informal sector is often an expression of the inability of the formal economy to generate jobs and therefore of indirectly promoting a surplus labour supply.

Poverty relations with educational disadvantage operate in both directions: on the one hand, insufficient education leads to poverty, and on the other, poverty limits the conditions for acquisition of an adequate educational level.

Finally, the concept of poverty is directly connected with the undervaluation of the quality of public spaces by the government: the lack of valuable public spaces is particularly damaging to poor people living in urban areas who already lack both physical space and opportunities influencing urban affairs (Beall & Fox, 2006). To governments, public spaces in poor neighbourhoods are usually not considered as a relevant condition for intervention when compared to the housing issue. By saying this it should also be considered that even the inhabitants of the slums might not be aware of the real importance of the role that those spaces have on the daily life of their community. But this it is another issue related to the social face of the problem, that could be deeply developed in a research, trying to understand which are the real dynamics that create the base of the problem.

To sum up, it can be said that the key characteristics of urban poverty and vulnerability are the reliance on a monetised and informal economy, the lack of access to basic services with inadequate housing and the insecurity of the tenure, the social fragmentation and the exposure to violence and crime, the increasing experience of warfare and terrorism, the vulnerability to disease and the environmental hazards.⁸ But, in any case there cannot be given a universal definition of urban poverty, as this factor changes according to the different historical periods, different levels of development in the world, different State policies and economics, which are then led to calculate and measure poverty considering

⁷ Giménez, M. & Ginobili, M. (2003) *Las "Villas de emergencia" como espacios urbanos estigmatizados*. HAOL, p. 77.

⁸ Beall, J. & Fox, S. (2006) *Urban poverty and development in the 21st century. Towards an inclusive and sustainable world*. Oxfam GB Research Report, p. 7.

different evaluation methods. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that one of the key factors to describe clearly urban poverty could be the image that public spaces assume in the urban context, that among with its absences are important features to show poverty and vulnerability: no pleasant places for people to meet, gather together and express themselves means social exclusion, marginalization and poverty of spaces, ideas, incentives and aids.

2.1.1 POVERTY IN LATIN AMERICA

The middle class of Latin America was affected by the debt crisis of the 1980s and later by the structural adjustment programs which followed: by the processes of concentration of income, the increase of private services and the loss of quality of public services, as well as by the changes in the labour market.

In Chile in 2000 it was observed that the low-income sectors were the most affected by job loss and the depreciation of their income. The increase in open unemployment rates⁹ in the country and in the Metropolitan Region since 1998 was reproduced in higher levels of inequality. The Chilean social structure exhibited a higher concentration of income in the upper class and a poor differentiation in the lower class. Those who belong to the last one were very vulnerable: any precarious working conditions might mean falling into poverty¹⁰.

In Mexico, only the income of managers and professional workers improved considerably over the 1990s. The remaining occupational groups, some belonging to middle class, administrative employees, self-employed, manual skilled workers and low-skilled services workers suffered deterioration in their real income.

In Uruguay, the processes of impoverishment were linked to the behaviour of the labour market, including the increased rates of open unemployment and informal employment and the relative reduction in public employment. The impoverishment was focused on declining sectors of the lower middle class.

In Brazil, the middle-class feared losing their consumption levels, but they believed that government and the neoliberal economic reforms would allow a return to the world of consumption of the middle

⁹ The open unemployment rate is the relationship between the population that sought work, made concrete efforts and is available to work and the economically active population of 15 years and over per hundred.

¹⁰ Kessler, G. & Di Virgilio, M. (2008) *La nueva pobreza urbana: dinámica global, regional y argentina en las últimas dos décadas*. Revista De La Cepal, p. 35-37.

classes. The low-income Brazilians began to buy goods and services whose consumption was traditionally limited to the middle and upper classes, such as duplex refrigerators, cell phones, cars, air tickets, tour packages and credit cards: the access to these facilities was facilitated by controlling inflation, credit growth and falling costs of goods and technologies.¹¹

In Latin America, there are three criteria to measure the poverty. The first one is the poverty line assigning the condition of poor people in households whose income per capita is insufficient to support the costs of a minimum standard of consumption. The second one is the unsatisfied basic needs, a criterion that assimilates poverty with deficiencies in housing type, nutrition, access to health and education. The third one is the integrated method, combining the above two criteria. It distinguishes between cases of chronic or structural poverty. In the late 1990's, six out of ten poor people lived in urban areas, a situation that makes Latin America the developing region that best exemplifies the global process of "urbanization of poverty", in contrast to Asia and Africa where most of their poor population was still in rural areas.¹²

The methodology commonly used to measure the level of poverty is the minimum food basket (CBA), set based on an established daily caloric and protein intake. The relation between food expenditures and total expenditures is established as a measurements parameter. This coefficient (the Engel coefficient) is then applied to establish the cost of a total basket (CBT). To arrive at a monetary value: $\$CBT = \$CBA * 1/\text{Engel coefficient}$. Considering that different people have different caloric and protein needs that vary with gender and age, the equivalence must be adapted according to the specifications of each subject. The kilo-caloric and protein needs of a male adult between 30 and 59 years old, doing moderate activity, are used as referent unit. For Argentina, 2700kcal/day is the adult equivalent, which is the highest of the five countries considered. In Brazil, the caloric needs are estimated to be around 2144 kcal/day. In Mexico and Peru, the values used are 2220 and 2318 kcal/day, respectively.¹³ The relation between the minimum food basket and the kilo-caloric needs for the total expenditures of the body is the current method to calculate how much an adult should spend to buy food to reach this minimum level: Latin America is the region with the greatest inequality, a situation that limits the prospects for

¹¹ Kessler, G. & Di Virgilio, M. (2008) *La nueva pobreza urbana: dinámica global, regional y argentina en las últimas dos décadas*. Revista De La Cepal, p. 35-37.

¹² Arriagada, C. (2000) *Pobreza en América Latina: Nuevos escenarios y desafíos de políticas para el hábitat urbano*. CEPAL - SERIE Medio Ambiente Y Desarrollo, p. 7-8.

¹³ Hardoy, J. & Almansi, F. (2011) *Assessing the scale and nature of urban poverty in Buenos Aires*. Human Settlements Working Paper Series, p. 7-8.

overcoming poverty, and this disparity is given also by the system that is used to measure the poverty line.

2.1.2 POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT IN ARGENTINA

At the end of the 20th century Argentina passed through various socio-economic crises, and consequently implemented a new growth model based on the neoliberal paradigm. Poverty increased following the process of privatization of public enterprises, the reorganization of the state, the opening of the economy and the restructuring of the private sector. Beyond the original poor class this process started adding people that previously belonged to the middle class. The high-income sectors went to live in exclusive peripheral areas, in self-sufficient neighbourhoods with costly homes, services, private security; the poorest people went to live in the periphery as well as in areas of lower real estate value: *villas miseria*.¹⁴

Between 1980 and 1990 the Argentina working population lost about 40% of their income. With the deep crisis of 1970 a lot of families of the middle class saw their incomes going below the poverty line. In the Greater Buenos Aires poverty grew by 67% (about 13 million inhabitants) during the 1980s. In those initial years, the phenomenon of the “new poverty” was caused largely by the impact of inflationary and hyperinflationary processes on income, while in the 1990s it was due mainly to high unemployment rates. Excessive debt and rent, unpaid interests and new forms of informal economy caused the “new poverty”.¹⁵

By 2007 poverty decreased, but the percentage was still high: 35,1% of the population was considered poor, of which 12,7% indigent. The inequalities were generated from the different incomes and rights of the people regarding the access of productive assets, credits, health, education and technologies. In the late 1990s, 26,7% of people did not receive enough income to access the basic basket of goods and services. In May 2003, 54,7% of the population of Argentina was below the poverty line and 26,3% of it was indigent; at that time, the unemployment rate was 15,6% and the underemployment rate was 18,8%, a situation that was affecting most of all the youth groups in the poorest regions. When in 2007 Cristina Kirchner took office, Argentina was passing through the highest critical moment in the country's history, due to a de-industrialisation process and the fall of the middle-class that lost their

¹⁴ Giménez, M. & Ginobili, M. (2003) *Las "Villas de emergencia" como espacios urbanos estigmatizados*. HAOL, p. 75.

¹⁵ Kessler, G. & Di Virgilio, M. (2008) *La nueva pobreza urbana: dinámica global, regional y argentina en las últimas dos décadas*. Revista De La Cepal, p. 33.

productive bases. With the new administration, the economy of Argentina changed in a very short time: the poverty percentage decreased to 23,4% and the indigence percentage decreased to 8,2%, three in five unemployed people found jobs.¹⁶

1990s	2003	2007	2016
CARLOS MENEM presidency (1989-1999)	NESTOR KIRCHNER presidency (2003-2007)	CRISTINA KIRCHNER presidency (2007-2015)	MAURICIO MACRI presidency (2015-now)
26,7% people below poverty line	54,7% people below poverty line	23,4% people below poverty line	30,3% people below poverty line
	26,3% indigent	8,2% indigent	6,1% indigent
	15,6% unemployment rate 18,8% underemployment rate		

→ 2001 CRISIS
FERNANDO DE LA RUA
provisional presidency
(1999-2001)

3. Summary table of levels of poverty reached in Argentina between 1990s and 2016

The key policies that made this change possible included the recovery of the sovereign political capacity, the state reconstruction, generating tax revenues, increasing public investment in infrastructure and restoring social investment; the improvement of industry, encouraged by active policies that sought to encourage domestic demand; the increase and diversification of exports, due to the increasing weight of industrial products; the increase in investments such as tourism, public promotion policies and private investments; the support of small and medium enterprises; the improvement of efficiency of tax collection and the reduction of evasion; the reactivation of regional economies; the restoration of investments in health and education.¹⁷

According to the Consumers Index price set by INDEC (National Institute of Statistics and Censuses) on January 2007, poverty was unequally distributed within Argentina. While the city of Buenos Aires had 6,4% of the nation's population and 2,1% of that was living in poverty and extreme poverty respectively, the municipalities in the country had on average 22,9% living in poverty and 9,7% in extreme poverty. By the EPH (Permanent Household Survey) of 2006 there were also major differences

¹⁶ Kliksberg, B. (2008) *Poverty and development: lessons from Argentina*. Progressive Governance, p. 2-3.

¹⁷ Kliksberg, B. (2008) *Poverty and development: lessons from Argentina*. Progressive Governance, p. 4-7.

between urban centres of different regions within Argentina; the North-eastern and North-western regions had 30% or more of their population living in poverty.¹⁸



4. Villa José León Suárez, Buenos Aires.

2.2 URBAN SEGREGATION

“La ciudad siempre es un conjunto de segmentos más o menos discontinuos, lo que constituye su esencia misma. La ciudad evoluciona según una dinámica de cambio permanente, ligada entre otras cosas, a la evolución tecnológica, económica y social” (Vidal Rojas, 2000).¹⁹

The term “social exclusion” arose in Europe when the debate about poverty and inequality started; it was closely related with the urbanization topic, because of the phenomenon of migration and the natural population growth.

¹⁸ Hardoy, J. & Almansi, F. (2011) *Assessing the scale and nature of urban poverty in Buenos Aires*. Human Settlements Working Paper Series, p. 14.

¹⁹ *“The city is always a set of more or less discontinuous segments, which is its very essence. The city evolves according to a dynamic of permanent change, linked, among other things, to technological, economic and social evolution”.*

According to Bastia there are five key elements that influence the social exclusion of immigrants in urban settings: unemployment, housing, immigrant status and social differentiation based on race and ethnicity, gender relations regarding the interaction. Racism and ethnicity have a huge weight in the social inclusion of immigrants: in the case of Buenos Aires, immigrants from neighbouring countries in general, are identified as the “others”.²⁰

Different interpretations have been made about the informality of the urban habitat, from which they assumed the transience of the phenomenon, explaining its origin as a temporary mismatch provoked by the migrations, that would be surpassed by the dynamics of the modern sector, to others that maintained that the urban informality was a permanent expression of the functioning of dependent capitalist society.²¹



5. Urban segregation shown in a photo, Paraisópolis, São Paulo.

Urban segregation appears today as an emerging urban form in the whole world: *gated communities* in the United States, *countries* in Argentina, *condomínios fechados* (closed neighbourhoods) in Brazil. In

²⁰ Bastia, T. (2007) *Urbanización, migración y exclusión social: viñetas desde las villas miseria*. Papeles, 98, p. 88-90.

²¹ Clichevsky, N. (2000) *Informalidad y segregación urbana en América Latina. Una aproximación*. Naciones Unidas. Cepal. Eclac, (28), p. 12-13.

the city of Buenos Aires these closed housing estates have recently become a massive urban phenomenon: in the year 2000 in the Metropolitan Region of Buenos Aires there were 351 closed neighbourhoods with a population around 50.000 inhabitants. Urban segregation is not just about the enclosed clusters, but the separation of different socio-economic groups, through gated communities or through stigmatised neighbourhoods.

The closed urbanizations of Argentina descend from the country clubs, a model imported from England in the 1930s. These were secondary residences, of relative comfort, often devoid of potable water and sewage networks, built out of the city around large sports facilities: golf or polo, tennis courts, gyms and swimming pools. With the growing insecurity of the 1970s, the few existing *countries* began to become major residences for families that wanted to move away from the city centre; the closed neighbourhood became a reality in the 1990s after the extension of the main motorway - the Panamericana - that gives the access to the city.²²

The difference between the closed neighbourhood of the city centre and the rest of the suburb is its homogeneity and its architectural coherence guaranteed by a very strong control of the community over the production of urban space. Viewed from the outside, the closed neighbourhoods also disrupt the peri-urban landscape: they inscribe the social contrast in the city, exposing the inequalities due to the most radical geographical distance between rich and poor. In fact, apart from a few *villas*, often hidden and concealed in the middle of the wealthy urban fabric of Buenos Aires, such as Villa 31, the passage from the rich neighbourhoods of the centre of Buenos Aires to the poor neighbourhoods of the great periphery of the capital city was made with an abrupt degradation. At the same time as they increase the consciousness of the other, of the difference, the closed neighbourhoods do everything possible to hide that contrast, hiding people, their houses and their ways of living from the outside.

In the closed housing estates, the square has no reason to be: the street itself is limited to its minimal function, that of being a space of circulation and transit, but loses all the wealth of meaning and practices that can be in the city-centre: the streets of the closed housing estates, in most cases, are not even bordered by sidewalks.²³

The term “fragmentation” from the 1990s was associated with the idea of “urban crisis”, marked by radical transformations of the spatial dynamics and the modalities of metropolitan management; changes

²² Thuillier, G. (2005) *El impacto socio-espacial de las urbanizaciones cerradas: el caso de la Región Metropolitana de Buenos Aires*. Eure, XXXI (93), p. 6-9.

²³ Thuillier, G. (2005) *El impacto socio-espacial de las urbanizaciones cerradas: el caso de la Región Metropolitana de Buenos Aires*. Eure, XXXI (93), p. 10-11.

linked to new forms of political and economic regulation in a context of attenuation of population growth.

In the Buenos Aires case, the crisis of the 1980s and the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s, which led to the impoverishment and unemployment of entire segments of society, profoundly altered the mechanisms of integration in the city and in the territory. The term fragmentation recovers all its meaning in contrast to the history of a city that was conceived as a machine, designed to modernize the country and integrate its inhabitants. The urbanization of the city and its immense periphery cannot be dissociated from the strong upward social mobility of the 1940s and 1970s and the massive access to housing ownership and employment. Fragmentation appears as a phenomenon intimately related to the tormented political and economic history of the country.²⁴

According to Prévot-Schapira, in Latin America, the use of the term fragmentation unfolds into three main directions: the study of public policies and the new modes of governance of continental cities, the characterization of economic transformations associated with globalization and new management strategies, and the analysis of the contradictory relationship between social change and urban structure evolutions. Political and institutional fragmentation coincides both in Latin America and in Europe with processes of decentralization that weaken or modify the role of the states. If the population growth since the 1980s has been reduced, the expansion of the metropolitan area continues. The agglomeration of Buenos Aires is one of the most notorious examples of divided metropolis.²⁵

In the Latin American cities despite diversification of products and residential locations for the high-income sectors, self-segregation of urban elites has been perpetuated and, in some cases, strengthened. Meanwhile, on the border of the great metropolis, the process of suburbanization of the low-income population continues, largely under the responsibility of a state that has favoured logics of localization of social housing based only on the criterion of the real estate value and ignoring the problem of the costs of displacement of the poorest from the peripheries. The trend towards the verticalization and densification of the consolidated neighbourhoods through the security towers and the construction of

²⁴ Prévot-Schapira, M. & Cattaneo Pineda, R. (2008) *Buenos Aires: la fragmentación en los intersticios de una sociedad polarizada*. Eure, XXXIV (103), p. 74-75.

²⁵ Prévot-Schapira, M. & Cattaneo Pineda, R. (2008) *Buenos Aires: la fragmentación en los intersticios de una sociedad polarizada*. Eure, XXXIV (103), p. 75-77.

closed neighbourhoods in modest peripheral sectors have favoured a greater diffusion of the upper middle classes under the model of the residential enclave.²⁶

2.2.1 THE INFORMAL CITY

At this point it will be introduced the topic of the informal dimension of the city, that is still related with the concept of urban segregation, but with the focus on different issues: the informal city found place at the bottom of the formal city mainly for its lack of basic services and legal property. These two concerns are closely co-related and they are part of the problem that affects in a larger scale the South American metropolis: the creation of residential areas characterized by a marked social or ethnic homogeneity, and by a well-defined and circumscribed localization over the areas that encompass or confine with them.

In cities, the illegal, irregular and informal habitat involves two forms of transgression: the dominance and the urbanization process. The first one is based on the lack of rental agreements; the second one is grounded on non-compliance with the city's building regulations. Each of them is embodied in different types of informality, in which different agents are involved and define different forms of urban segregation; they are defined as transgressive because they do not respect the urban planning rules, the geological and environmental constraints, the infrastructure compliance, the seismic, water and electricity regulations, among others, and they transgress the alternatives offered by the state.

Two types of segregation can be distinguished, although linked together: socio-economic segregation, measured by the income level, the level of education and the conditions of life; sociocultural segregation measured by the different language, nationality, religion and ethnicity.

Segregation processes are very dynamic both temporally and spatially and are evaluated negatively by the urban diseconomies that they generate: the difficulties for the functioning of the city and the reproduction of poverty and inequalities (urban violence, drug addiction, early fertility).²⁷

²⁶ Prévot-Schapira, M. & Cattaneo Pineda, R. (2008) *Buenos Aires: la fragmentación en los intersticios de una sociedad polarizada*. Eure, XXXIV (103), p. 80.

²⁷ Clichevsky, N. (2000) *Informalidad y segregación urbana en América Latina. Una aproximación*. Naciones Unidas. Cepal. Eclac, (28), p. 8-10.

There are two main types of urban informality in Latin America: from the state property point of view the occupation of public or private land slum, the occupation of individual lots and the occupation of public areas; from the point of view of the urbanization the land occupation without urban environmental conditions to be used as residential (floodable and contaminated), the construction of houses outside the existing regulations and the extreme densities.²⁸

The closed urbanizations that have surfaced in the periphery of the agglomeration of Buenos Aires in the 1990s contribute to redefining urbanity as a relationship of the inhabitants with their city. The choice of living in closed neighbourhoods means choosing a less dense city, segmented into homogeneous and separate functional and residential units, which values the proximity to nature: a city founded on the family cell, the individual house. This American urban spreading model opposes to the traditional European city, which was that of the centre-city: a dense, multifunctional, architecturally, socially and culturally heterogeneous city, where public space plays a great role as a founding place, landmark and reference of urbanity.²⁹

In the case of Buenos Aires, the processes of privatization, deregulation and economic openness accelerated the internal metropolitan differentiation between the spaces of the capitalism and the increasingly marginalized urban spot. In Buenos Aires, the wave of privatizations of the 1990s allowed the establishment of a new generation of increasingly dissociated actors from the political-administrative field, and the affirmation of an administrative strategy that favoured a differentiated management of space. We could use the expression of administrative fragmentation to describe the delimitation of differentiated intervention perimeters in the humbler neighbourhoods, with the consequent risk of creating a city at two or three speeds.³⁰

A good example of urban segregation in the city of Buenos Aires is given by the Ciudad Evita (Evita city); set in the periphery where it includes the processes of micro-fragmentation in the scale of the block, the neighbourhood and the commune. Ciudad Evita, located in the commune of La Matanza, one of the most popular suburban corners of Buenos Aires, is a good example to examine a micro-fragmentation dynamic that was built and exacerbated by the irregularities of the chaotic history of the suburbs and by the violence related with the economic and political crises that have hit the great

²⁸ Clichevsky, N. (2000) *Informalidad y segregación urbana en América Latina. Una aproximación*. Naciones Unidas. Cepal. Eclac, (28), p. 15-16.

²⁹ Thuillier, G. (2005) *El impacto socio-espacial de las urbanizaciones cerradas: el caso de la Región Metropolitana de Buenos Aires*. Eure, XXXI (93), p. 19.

³⁰ Prévot-Schapira, M. & Cattaneo Pineda, R. (2008) *Buenos Aires: la fragmentación en los intersticios de una sociedad polarizada*. Eure, XXXIV (103), p. 77-79.

Argentine metropolis. Conceived in the early 1950s as a model garden city “Ciudad Evita” was one of the most emblematic works of the Peronist period: a city of fifteen thousand Californian type chalets with the shape of Evita Peron profile. This ambitious project, was inspired by the principles of “The Garden City of Tomorrow” by Ebenezer Howard, that later were implemented by Raymond Unwin in his “Garden Suburb”, and reflects the non-autonomous characteristic of dependence of this model on a central city and destined almost exclusively to the housing function.



6. Google earth image of the Ciudad Evita, Buenos Aires.

The project of approaching the values and living conditions of workers and the middle class was thus ratified by the choice of the individual house – the chalet type - as a basic housing unit. But from the military coup of 1955, the territory of Ciudad Evita was progressively dismembered according to a complex succession of symbolic and urbanistic aggressions, and of filling its interstitial spaces creating a habitat for the small middle class.

Within the framework of a brutal policy of eradicating the *villas* in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, several temporary housings blocks were defined within the perimeter of Ciudad Evita. In a context marked by cyclical crises, the boundaries of this space fractured by public and popular action crystallize, creating groups located with opposite interests: inhabitants of the houses threatened by the low value generated by the proximity of urban marginality.

Nowadays in the south, Ciudad Evita works as a kind of closed neighbourhood, protected from the progression of the popular classes by a real containment zone declared a historical-ecological heritage

zone in 1997. In its northern section, the proximity to slums and impoverished neighbourhoods has led to a devaluation of land prices.

In the case of Ciudad Evita, the occupation of Buenos Aires periphery appears as a gigantic fragmented space, a pattern of urbanization in autonomous cells, and the inequalities generated by the functioning of the real estate market, but also because of political action dominated by the intermittency and political over-determination of conflicts.³¹

To sum up it can be said that the economic growth, when not mediated by redistributive economic and social policies, generates poverty and exclusion as part of the process of accumulation under the market logic: the expansion of the *villas* corresponded to the expansion of industrial activity.

When talking about segregation, three issues are mentioned: the unequal distribution of social *strata* in the space of a city; the processes of spatial distancing between diverse social groups, usually those at the ends of the social scale; the process of symbolic distancing between social groups located in the same neighbourhood or city.

Poverty itself is the cause of marginality and together they constituted the vicious circle of poverty.

2.3 HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE POOR HOUSING AREAS OF ARGENTINE CITIES

In order to define a historical evolution of the phenomenon of the *villas* we have to date back to 1880, when the European liberalism, the accelerated urbanization process, the industrialization of the country and the immigration wave began. Starting from this turning point the housing issue of the popular sectors in the major Argentine cities and particularly in Buenos Aires turns into a critical matter. We can resume the historical transformation in three main phases: European immigration, Latin American immigration and impoverishment of the Argentine population.

In 1990 the 86,9% of the population of Latin America was living in urban areas, today the 79% of the population live in cities, and it is predicted that by 2050 it will reach the 90%³².

³¹ Prévot-Schapira, M. & Cattaneo Pineda, R. (2008) *Buenos Aires: la fragmentación en los intersticios de una sociedad polarizada*. Eure, XXXIV (103), p. 86-88.

³² ONU (2011) *The State of World Population 2011*, United Nations Population Fund.

In 1869 Argentina already had 11% of its population living in urban agglomerations of more than 100.000 inhabitants, the average was five times higher than the rest of the world, like the United States and approximately twice of the concentration of the European population. Argentina had one of the fastest processes of early urban development among Latin American countries: in 1914, the urban population surpassed for the first time the rural one, with the highest concentration in Buenos Aires, Cordoba and Rosario. The variety of natural resources, the high income per capita and the Argentine capitalism attracted a large migratory mass to the country. Argentina was the second largest destination of immigration after United States: 5 million people moved to this country between 1880 and 1930 (in 1869 the native population was 1.877.490). The urban and port centres like Buenos Aires, Rosario, Montevideo and São Paulo were chosen as places where to live between 1880 and 1910 because of the high request of workforce for the new industries and constructions. People from all over the world were coming to work in these ports.³³

The immigrants and the working population that arrived in the cities started to live in the so called “*casas de inquilinato*” or “*conventillos*”, in 1892 21,8% of the population of Buenos Aires was living in these facilities. The historical process of the slum formations started with the *conventillos*, and ended up with the formation of the “*villas miseria*” and “*asentamientos urbanos*”.

2.3.1 THE CONVENTILLO

The term “*conventillo*” had its origin in the similarity between the rooms of the tenants and the cells of the convents. The development of this type of housing started in Buenos Aires when the massive immigration came from Europe. This phenomenon of housing reproduced political, social and economic inequalities between the new class of workers. These dwellings were localized in the central areas of the city, and because of their location it started a social and housing process of segregation due to the exodus of the upper class because of the bad sanitary conditions of that time. Epidemic diseases such as cholera, typhus, smallpox, yellow fever and diphtheria forced the population to a situation of housing relocation: the richer families abandoned their luxurious colonial houses arguing that the focus of the infection were the *conventillos* in the city. This process of segregation that changed the urban landscape, started at the end of the nineteenth century and, continues to exist today. The first constructions were made with sheet iron and wood, with two or three floors, and a mix of cultures was living inside of them: Italians, Polish,

³³ Bontempo, L. (2010) *Umbral de un siglo. Una historia de la vivienda social en la Argentina. De los conventillos al Plan Federal*. Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Planificación Federal, Inversión Pública y Servicios, p. 25.

Yugoslavs, Croatians, Ukrainian and Spanish and the majority was working at the port. This forced coexistence of various nationalities was generating conflicts inside of the dwellings.³⁴



7. Courtyard of a Conventillo, 1907.

The *conventillo* became the icon of the social housing of the beginning of the 20th century reflecting the lack of protection of the working class: overcrowding slums with narrow rooms with no air and light, poor sanitary facilities and abusive rents. But on the other side these poor dwellings became an integrative cultural environment promoting high levels of sociability between all the tenants coming from different countries of the world, sharing parties, food and struggles. The *conventillo* was the space of misery but, at the same time a spot of solidarity and social integration, a culture of mixture: anarchists, poets, gringos, hoodlums, laundresses, prostitutes and workers. These residences were hosting approximately 30 rooms each, in each room of these was living a family in a space of 4x4x4 sq. Most of these houses were built by urban speculators and based on a strategy of maximum exploitation of the plot. Most of them had a central patio as ordinary space between all the rooms with laundry, kitchen and toilet for shared use. One of the most famous settlements was the neighbourhood La Boca inhabited

³⁴ Ursino, S. (2012) *De los conventillos a las villas miserias y asentamientos: un continuo en el paisaje urbano de la Argentina*. Universidad Nacional De La Plata, p. 68-69.

largely by Italians (from Liguria) that were mainly working in the maritime and port activity in the docks; the distinctive characteristics of these houses were the corrugated sheets used as walls on the most varied colours, once they were using the leftover paint from ships to decorate their houses.³⁵

It is interesting to see how the increment of the *conventillo* and its tenants changed during the years:

Year 1880: 1.770 *conventillos*, 24,023 rooms, 51,915 inhabitants, 2.2 inhab/room.

Year 1883: 1.868 *conventillos*, 25,645 rooms, 64,156 inhabitants, 2.5 inhab/room.

Year 1895: 2.249 *conventillos*, 37,603 rooms, 94,743 inhabitants, 2.5 inhab/room.

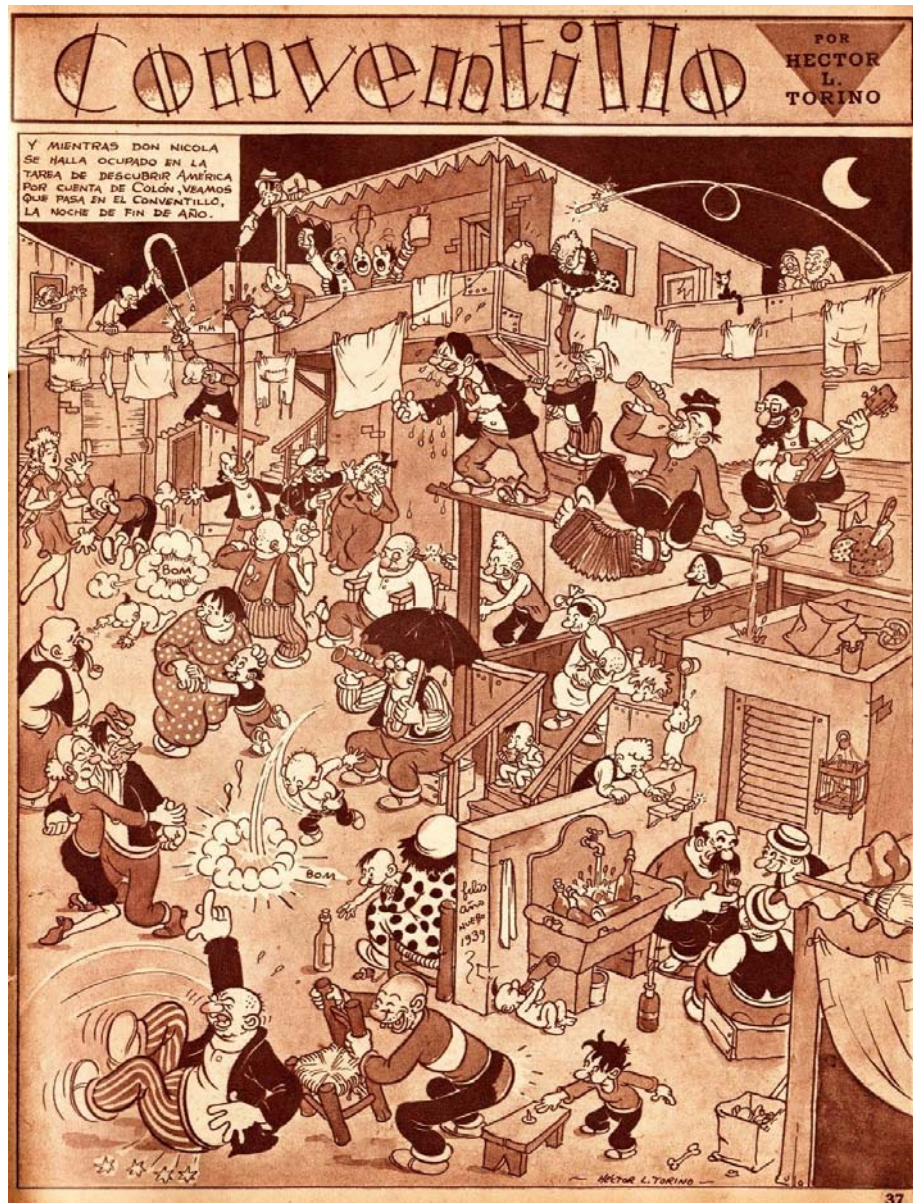
Year 1905: 2.297 *conventillos*, 38,405 rooms, 129,257 inhabitants, 3,4 inhab/room.³⁶

Because of all the political, social and spatial inequalities, the increase of the municipal and territorial taxes and consequently the increase of the rent, 129.000 dwellers at the end of august 1907 started a rent strike “*huelga de inquilinos*”. The tenants of the *conventillos* were asking for a reduction of 30% of the rent, removal of the three months of deposit, more flexibility with the payment and improvement of the housing conditions. The strike lasted for three months. At the beginning of October began the evictions of the tenants by the infantry and security squad of the Police of the Capital. On the 22th of October during the eviction of the neighbourhood San Juan 677, the worker Miguel Pepe was assassinated and became the martyr of the movement. The strike culminated in forced evictions, violence, repression, death and deportation.³⁷ It can be said that the *conventillos* are the ancestors of the current *villas*, in fact these residential complexes represent the first places where immigrants began to install after their arrival in the country, and report a history similar to that of *villas*, with expulsions, strikes and episodes of violence by the police and the government. The general idea of how these places were born and how they developed serves as a historical background to introduce the subsequent phenomenon of emergency *villas*.

³⁵ Ramos, J. (1999) *Arquitectura del habitar popular en Buenos Aires: el conventillo*. Instituto De Arte Americano E Investigaciones Estéticas, p. 4-6.

³⁶ Dr. Guillermo Rawson, Censos Generales de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires y Departamento Nacional del Trabajo.

³⁷ Ramos, J. (1999) *Arquitectura del habitar popular en Buenos Aires: el conventillo*. Instituto De Arte Americano E Investigaciones Estéticas, p. 16-17.



8. Poster of the realities of a conventillo, Héctor L. Torino.

2.3.2 THE VILLA MISERIA

“Las villas son espacio de ciudad sin estatus de ciudad, pero innegablemente parte de la dinámica urbana metropolitana. Se marca simbólicamente a las villas como el último escalón de la jerarquía urbana” (Cravino, 2009).³⁸

³⁸ “The villas are spaces of the city without a city-status, but they are undeniably part of the metropolitan urban dynamics. The villas are symbolically marked as the last step of the urban hierarchy”.

In Argentina, “Villa” is a neighbourhood where housing, infrastructure and services are precarious and the occupation of land is informal. In other South American countries, these neighbourhoods are known by various names such as *favelas* in Brazil, *callampas* in Chile, *barriadas* in Peru and *cantegriles* in Uruguay. In 1930 the first informal settlement known in the city of Buenos Aires, located in a central area and popularly known by names like “Villa Esperanza”, “Villa Desocupación”, “Villa Desolación”.³⁹ It was located around the dock of Puerto Nuevo and because of its central location it expressed an unprecedented contrast in the city.⁴⁰



9. A newspaper article talking about Villa Miseria, 1931.

In 1930 the first violent interruption of democracy took place in the history of the twentieth century Argentina. Between March and December of that same year in Latin America six successful coups happened and four failed, and with these events the global crisis started. Unemployment levels increased: in 1932, 87.223 people were unemployed in Buenos Aires, and 333.997 in the whole country. The tenants started to abandon the *conventillos* due to the numerical increase of families, the lack of employment, and the continued rise of the rents and of the deposit; because of that, these housing

³⁹ Hope, idleness, bleakness villas.

⁴⁰ Snitcofsky, V. (2015) *Las villas de Buenos Aires durante el siglo XX. Imágenes literarias en perspectiva histórica*. Conicet-Universidad De Buenos Aires, p 290-291.

solutions were replaced by informal neighbourhoods, giving rise to the process of formation of the *villas*, where no money was required for the rent. During the following decades, the percentage of internal migrants in the *villas* increased significantly, because of the increase of the industrialization process which took place in order to substitute imports and generated increased demand for employment in the metropolitan areas of the major urban centres.⁴¹

The inhabitants of the *villas* were not unemployed, but mostly workers whose salaries were not sufficient to access other types of housing. The houses were built with precarious materials: tin, cardboard, brick, corrugated sheet and wood. The lack of services was almost absolute, when the water network was near, the tenants connected to it illegally, the same happened for the electrical energy system.⁴²

The first *villas* took place under bridges, beside the main avenues, in wastelands, close to the factories and to the slaughterhouses. They grew close to the places where the “*villeros*” were working.

After Villa Desocupación, the new areas that were occupied between 1950 and 1960 were in Bajo Belgrano, Colegiales and Flores, that later became the *villas* 1, 11, 13 and 14. In 1940 the *villas* started to appear also outside of the city of Buenos Aires, such as in Villa Jardín and Lanús.⁴³

It is important to see how the numbers of population of the metropolitan city of Buenos Aires living in *villas miseria* between 1956 and 1981 changed:

Year 1956: Capital Federal 33.920, Gran Buenos Aires 78.430, total 112.358.

Year 1970: Capital Federal 106.776, Gran Buenos Aires 344.589, total 451.365.

Year 1981: Capital Federal 14.000, Gran Buenos Aires 290.920, total 304.920 (Yujnovsky, 1984).

On the 5th of November of 1934 was created the National Council to combat the unemployment (Junta Nacional Para Combatir la Desocupación - JUNALD), which remained for the next ten years. The main plan of this assembly was to resolve the problem of the unemployment with measures such as the transfer of the workers to areas of the country with greater demand for jobs, the construction of temporary

⁴¹ Snitcofsky, V. (2013) *Impactos urbanos de la gran depresión: el caso de Villa Desocupación en la ciudad de Buenos Aires (1932-1935)*. Cuaderno Urbano. Espacio, Cultura, Sociedad, p. 95-97.

⁴² Torres, H. (2006) *El mapa social de Buenos Aires (1940-1990)*. Ediciones FADU, p. 21.

⁴³ Gonzalez Duarte, L. (2015) *Villas miseria: la construcción del estigma en discursos y representaciones (1956-1957)*. Quilmes: Bernal: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, p. 37-39.

accommodation for the unemployed, the free training and the establishment of agricultural colonies. The first step taken by the JUNALD was the eviction from *Villa Desocupación*, and a part of its inhabitants were relocated in new residences in the port area. On one side, this strategy was good because of the people that were transferred to live in places with better conditions, with food, free access to the library and school-workshops for training to new trades, on the other side the action was imposed to the inhabitants and conducted with the pressure of the police intervention.⁴⁴

2.3.3 ERADICATION OF THE VILLAS

Between 1955 and 1983 the State intervention related to the phenomenon of the *villas* was aimed mainly to its eradication. This assumption legitimated two types of policy response: between 1955 and 1976 the eradication of the *villas* was carried out with the relocation of its residents in large housing complexes located in peripheral areas; between 1977 and 1983 it was accomplished through forced expulsion of its residents without creating alternative accommodation in which to relocate them.

The Emergency Plan of 1956 (Plan de Emergencia - PE) proposed the relocation of the inhabitants of the *villas*, and this action reflected a government policy that didn't follow people's interests. This plan had two main objectives: the relocation of the *villeros* and the promotion of the private sector. On one hand, the proposal of the plan consisted of a direct-action program in which state funds would be invested to relocate the population of the *villas*. On the other hand, the PE proposal intended to leave the private sector responsible for the provision of housing for the popular sectors. The plan began with a description of the *villas* situation and reported a census, then it proposed the relocation of the slums without evaluation of other alternatives and without any explanation of why this should be considered the most appropriate solution. Resuming, the proposal of the PE was the complete eviction of the *villas* and the relocation of the inhabitants in social housing complexes designed to re-educate them.⁴⁵

Six housing complexes were built with the Emergency Plan: Barrio Rivadavia (Flores, Capital Federal); Barrios Vicente López y Planez, Urquiza y Sarmiento (Villa Celina, Partido de la Matanza); Barrio Mitre (Saavedra, Capital Federal); Barrio Derqui (Caseros, Partido Tres de Febrero).

⁴⁴ Snitcofsky, V. (2013) *Impactos urbanos de la gran depresión: el caso de Villa Desocupación en la ciudad de Buenos Aires (1932-1935)*. Cuaderno Urbano. Espacio, Cultura, Sociedad, p. 97-98.

⁴⁵ Massidda, A. (2015) *El Estado Argentino ante las Villas Miseria. Una lectura del Plan de Emergencia/Plan Integral (1956/1957), primera iniciativa estatal de la erradicación*. Tesis Doctoral, Departamento De Arquitectura, King's College, Universidad De Cambridge, p. 3-6.



10. Resistance of the *villas*: few houses remaining, Revista Haroldo.

The realization of a massive eradication in the city came with the Eradication Slums Plan (Plan de Erradicación de Villas de Emergencia – PEVE) in 1966, and it was composed of two programs: transitional housing and permanent housing. Thus, just three new housing complexes were built in the city and twelve in the Gran Buenos Aires. Many of these were in flood areas and with an accessibility conditions worse than the *villas* where the relocated families were coming from.⁴⁶

The fast growing of the population of the *villas* challenged the National Plan of Action of December of 1967, whose goal was to control the *villeros* and improve their living conditions. Two ways of actions were taken: to build temporary housing where to relocate people until the “adaptation” of a new way of living, and to build permanent housing. Between 1968 and 1970 3.765 inhabitants of Buenos Aires and 35.691 inhabitants of the metropolitan region were relocated. This action was weak, some of the *villas miseria* that were evicted reappeared and new ones grew up. For this reason, in 1981 the population of the *villas* had duplicated. Old abandoned houses were occupied as well as buildings that were expropriated for the construction of highways. At the beginning of the 1990s 170.000 people were living in *villas*.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Jauri, N, *Las villas de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires: una historia de promesas incumplidas*. Universidad De Buenos Aires, p. 2-3.

⁴⁷ Pirez, P. (1994) *La formación de la ciudad metropolitana de Buenos Aires: de la riqueza al deterioro*. EURE, p. 33-37.

Since 1983 four programs were applied to the *villas* of Buenos Aires: in 1984 the Programa de Radicación y Solución Integral de Villas y Núcleos Habitacionales Transitorios (NHT); in 1991 the Programa de Radicación de Villas y Barrios Carenciados de la Capital Federal; in 2001 the Programa de Radicación, Integración y Transformación de Villas y Núcleos Habitacionales Transitorios; and in 2008 the Programa de Regularización y Ordenamiento del Suelo Urbano (PROSUR Hábitat).

While the total population of the city of Buenos Aires has grown only 4,1% during the period between 2001 and 2010, some *villas* have grown more than 100%. Every ten years or so, the *villas* double their population and this has been happening since the late 1980s.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Jauri, N, *Las villas de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires: una historia de promesas incumplidas*. Universidad De Buenos Aires, p. 11-12.

3

INFORM

Inform: to tell someone about particular facts, to educate, to give notice.

To verify if the purpose of this thesis has assumptions on which to propose a new solution to the problem is necessary to represent the picture of the situation. The objective is to set possible solutions to be considered at a given moment and in a specific context, accordingly on what has been learned from the case study. The reader is informed on the state of art of the topic to understand the suggestions for the new design solutions. In the following chapters, the historical development of Villa 31 will be presented, as well as the policies adopted during the last decades and the role of the tenants. A general overview will be provided: current condition, census data of people living there, housing circumstances, politics, associations involved and daily life. More than half million people in the city of Buenos Aires have housing problems: *villas*, informal settlements, and difficult access to loan for the rent. It's the same number of people who could fill nine River stadiums⁴⁹. The Housing Institute granted 6121 housing solutions between 2008 and 2014, these houses that were built represent only the 5% of the total that were necessary. The Buenos Aires housing deficit, in percentage terms, is the lowest in the country, but the one that declined the least in ten years.⁵⁰ This data shows how critic is the situation and how big is the housing issue in the city of Buenos Aires.

“The villas are characterized in general by the great integration deficit in which their population develops and by the great institutional distance in which the neighbourhood is. Facing this situation, the territorial registration of its inhabitants is composed especially by a very finished control of the

⁴⁹ River Plate stadium in Buenos Aires.

⁵⁰ Giambartolomei M. (2015) *Viviendas: sin acceso al crédito, una de cada tres familias alquila*. Lanacion.com.ar. Retrieved 5 December 2016, from <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1855852-viviendas-sin-acceso-al-credito-una-de-cada-tres-familias-alquila>

territory of the neighbourhood and by the existence of structures of solidarity very solid, complex and narrow at the same time. But their relations with the outside, with the institutional world, often put the villa in a situation of heteronomy. It evolves little and hardly integrates to the city, persisting as a differentiated and easily identifiable space. The numerous neighbourhood organizations are in this case concerned with feeding solidarity structures, but they have difficulties in pulling forward, towards norm or change” (Merklen, 2005).⁵¹

3.1 VILLA 31

“Out of sight, out of mind” could succinctly describe the Argentine government’s historical attitude towards its slum populations (Bartlett, 2016).

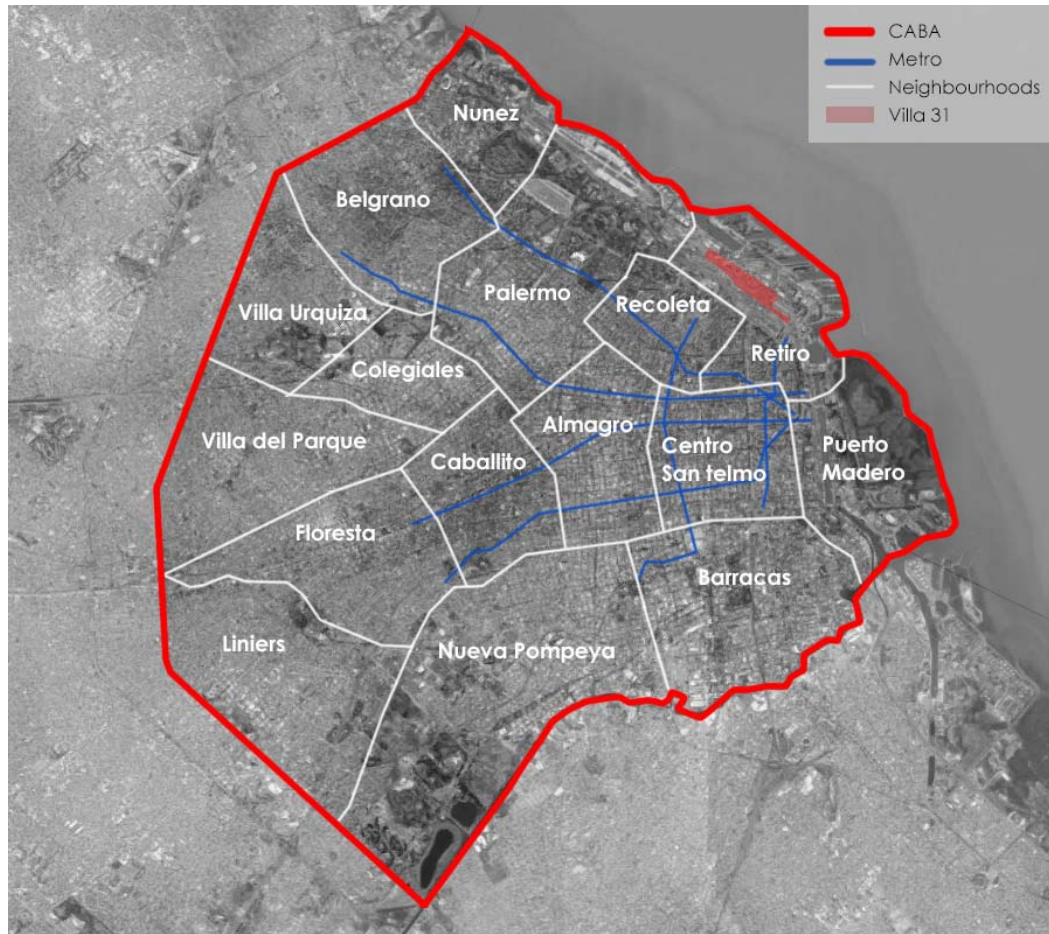
Villa 31 lies in Retiro, a wealthy and central neighbourhood that contains the main commercial centre along with a major transportation hub. It is an example of housing solution, socially produced to satisfy the needs of a part of the working class that lives in the city. There are 90.000 homes, built on government owned land directly adjacent to the train and bus terminals. A major 6-lane highway runs through the middle of the villa. The buildings are constructed of various materials: 97% are masonry construction, with only 3% made of cardboard, timber, or sheet iron and 91,8% of them have concrete floors.⁵² Its territory occupies the north edge of the centre of the City of Buenos Aires, in a trapezoidal area of 39 hectares.



11. Aerial view of Villa 31, the highway dividing the slum.

⁵¹ Cravino, M. (2009). *Vivir en la villa: relatos, trayectorias y estrategias habitacionales*. Los Polvorines: Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, p. 47-55.

⁵² Garfinkel, E. (2012). *Case study: Villa 31. The urban slum as a model for sustainable development*. North-eastern University, p. 12.



12. Map of CABA, Ciudad Autonoma de Buenos Aires.



13. Contextualization map of Villa 31 in Buenos Aires.

There are no other Argentine cities that attract similar numbers of urban dwellers as Buenos Aires because the entire economy is based there. The city centre itself has a population of 3 million, but Gran Buenos Aires contains 14 million, 38% of the entire country's population. The city and its surroundings contain over 1.000 *villas*, where 700.000 people live. *"In these areas; 30% of residents are from Argentina, while the other 70% come from Bolivia, Peru, and Paraguay; this large migrant numbers are due to Argentina's free national healthcare and education systems. About employment rates 43,5% of villa residents are unemployed, while 16.7% find work within the neighbourhood, and 35.7% in the city; most of these jobs, however, are in the informal sector, where contracts don't exist and wages are low."*⁵³



14. Google earth view of Villa 31 and surroundings.

Villa 31 is composed by the sectors Güemes, YPF, Comunicaciones, Inmigrantes, Autopista, Playón Este, Playón Oeste, San Martín/Ferrovionario, Cristo Obrero and 31 Bis (Table 5). Villa 31 is in an area of poverty in the centre of the metropolis, bordering the urban centre where political and economic decisions take place. This form of occupation has more than seven decades of existence, expression of impotence and neglect of the state.⁵⁴ It is undoubtedly the most well-known of the *villas* of Buenos Aires, emblematic and cited for many reasons: Padre Múgica was acting there; it is close to the Casa Rosada; it is one of the most politically organized. The location is strategic, since it is positioned in an

⁵³ Garfinkel, E. (2012). *Case study: Villa 31. The urban slum as a model for sustainable development*. North-eastern University, p. 9.

⁵⁴ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 21.

area where megaprojects of infrastructure and real estate investment have been planned since the beginning of the 1990s.⁵⁵ The *villa* implies a practice of thinking and using the space, the State should defend the social rights of the inhabitants and advocates a recognition of what was built by them and the consequent relevance of the actions of the improvement of the habitat. However, on the contrary, the neighbourhood projects were decided by technicians and politicians without listening to the residents, and many times it was planned to make a clean slate of the constructed space without considering the preservation of the existing public spaces. In all *villas* and in Villa 31 the access to public services, which tend to be of very poor quality, is critical: constant electricity cuts, collapsing of blind or sewage wells, lack or low pressure of water.⁵⁶ Regarding to the public spaces in Villa 31, it is quite clear that there are only a few or none green spaces or squares. The only place, where especially the young community gather, is a large football field. The lack of space is also reflected inside of the houses where the rooms, that usually serve as bedroom, kitchen and living room all together are usually under 10 sq. metres, and many of them without ventilation. These quite diminished areas of domestic space are aggravated by the already mentioned absence of collective space. Inhabitants cannot find outside of their homes some exterior spaces that could act as complementary areas of living.

Its central and non-peripheral presence is seen like a case of "exception". The *villa* is in a territory with the highest real estate value of the City, with good accessibility and service provision. The ownership of the land is almost in its entirety, national state ownership. The properties mostly belong to the old State Railways nowadays acquired from ADIF (Railway Infrastructure Manager).⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 24.

⁵⁶ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 60.

⁵⁷ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 100-105.



15. Entrance of Villa 31 to the side of the railroad tracks, Elena Parnisari.



16. The streets of Villa 31.

In 2009, the Buenos Aires legislature approved plans to integrate the *villa* into the city, although these official works are still yet to begin. However, the work of other urbanization projects has started: about

85 percent of the roads in the neighbourhood are paved, although the quality of housing is still very low and drainage non-existent; traffic lights have also been installed.⁵⁸

3.1.1 THE SECTORS

The Güemes sector, adjacent to the bus terminal station, from which it is separated by a linear square where predominantly commercial and occasionally sporting activities are developed, constitutes an authentic entrance gate from the city centre. It is precisely in this sector that the highest heights are developed added to a maximum occupation of the ground.

The Inmigrantes sector occupies a block in the police avenue in the north end of the town, constituting the original nucleus. Its linear arrangement alternates double and simple fronts on its organizational axis.

Towards the west, in a linear extension conditioned by the presence of the freeway to the south and the borders of parcels bordering to the north, the sectors Autopista, YPF and Comunicaciones follow. The first one, occupies the space under the highway when its height allows it or its edge when descending on slope; the second one lays in the boundary with the plots of the company that gives its name (fiscal oilfields), and the third one is near the post office building. Here the tissue has lower densities, demarcated areas with greater geometric orthogonality, and forms of occupation that configure a recognizable peripheral, suburban fabric.

In the south, between the motorway and the San Martín railway station, the sector 31 Bis was developed. This area appeared after the construction of the Ilía highway opened in the middle of the Villa 31, this implantation is a classic example of one-dimensional operation. The Cristo Obrero chapel, where Father Carlos Múgica officiated, once the centre of the neighbourhood at the time of its maximum territorial extension, is today its extreme west point, preserved despite the appearance of the highway, hidden and difficult to access after its descents.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Bartlett, J. (2016). *Argentina's strained relationship with its slums - Latin Correspondent*. Latin Correspondent.

⁵⁹ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 112-115.



17. Sector Autopista, relation between the highway and the houses, Elena Parnisari.

3.1.2 THE EVOLUTION

Villa 31 started to grow in 1930 when the European immigrants arrived in Argentina, and they started to settle down in the area close to the railway terminal of Retiro. At the beginning, it was called “Villa Desocupación”. This informal settlement took place there because of the great flow of immigration due to the global crisis, the unemployment, because the location close to the port, and the easy way to reach the working places from this area.

In 1940 this slum settlement started to take place at an extremely dense and unorganized rate.

In 1948 the formation of the neighbourhood “Inmigrantes” began, with most population that was coming from Italy.

In 1958 the first organizations of the inhabitants of the *villa* were created. In 1962, in addition to Inmigrantes, the neighbourhoods Güemes, Comunicaciones, Saldias and Ypf were formed.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Garfinkel, E. (2012). *Case study: Villa 31. The urban slum as a model for sustainable development*. North-eastern University, p. 16-26.

Between 1963 and 1964 the municipality recognized the neighbourhood organizations: federation of *villas* and neighbourhoods of emergency.

In 1968 the council of delegates was created. On the 6th of August, the Act by the council of delegates together with the CGT (General Confederation of Labour) of the Argentineans, declared to be against the plan to eradicate the *villas* established within the Law 17605.

Between 1968 and 1969 the lawyers J. Sobeles and R. Guevara began to work in the villa, next to the Father Carlos Múgica.

In 1971 lighting lines were made.

On the 11th May 1974 the Father Carlos Francisco Sergio Múgica Echagüe (or simply Father Carlos) after giving mass, in front of the Parish of San Francisco Solano, was assassinated by the AAA (Triple A, Anti-Communist Alliance Argentina). He came from an economically well-established family, appeared in Villa 31 in the 1960s he was a key figure in the *villa*. Múgica was taken as a figure and referent of protests and claims for rights, demanding the concession of the land to the neighbours, with whom he also promoted demands for better housing conditions and credits. The loss of a religious, political and social symbol strongly impacted the *villa*. His death massively mobilized the *villeros*, and from that moment on, he consolidated himself as a flag of protest and struggle of the inhabitants of the slum. Father Carlos, worked for the rights of the inhabitants, actively transmitting values of equality, freedom, and above all, empowering the *villeros* as central actors in decision-making.⁶¹

In the same year, the eradication plan of the *villa* started and some neighbours were transferred to Ciudadela and other districts of the city. The government ordered the slum-clearance and in 1976 during the last military dictatorship, when 30.000 detainees disappeared, it was demolished.

Between 1977 and 1979 most of the families of the *villa* were evicted, just 48 families resisted to the eviction. With the help of the church, the Copacabana cooperative created in Jose C. Paz was the destination of some of the evicted families of Villa 31. The inhabitants didn't give up and in 1979 they began the re-occupation of the *villa*, and started to build it again.

In 1983 the military dictatorship ended, and the process of repopulation of the *villa* began.

⁶¹ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 84-90.

In 1984 were emitted laws that forbid the informal settlements.

In 1989 the decree 1001 granted the ownership of the land to the inhabitants (a transfer of national fiscal land to the occupiers).

In 1990 Villa 31 was crossed by the 6-lane highway Pres. Arturo Illia, running directly through the *villa* dividing the neighbourhood in two, and giving origin to the Villa 31 Bis, with the eviction of several blocks.

In this way, in 1995 the development of the two *villas* together began to adhere to recognizable urban patterns.

In 1998 the Law 148 established the urbanization of all the *villas*.

Between 2001 and 2002 during the government of De La Rúa, a social outbreak and brutal repression happened due to a deep political crisis of the country. The work of the IEHU group (Institute of Human Space of the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Urbanism of Buenos Aires) began in the neighbourhood.

In 2005 after a plebiscite was created the team of delegates of the Villa 31 Bis. Through them, the participation of the neighbours took place with meetings. The team of delegates, against the eradication of Villa 31 and 31 Bis, was asking for land titling and final settlement for the neighbours, for an immediate urbanization with access to health, education, green spaces and public services, for a plan of urbanization under the control of the neighbours, and for no discrimination of tenants.

In 2006 after a march to Plaza de Mayo, the team of delegates delivered a request in the Casa Rosada and in the Government of the City.

In 2007 the team of delegates, together with the tenants of Villa 31 started a struggling to get line phones; and the meetings with ONABE (National Agency for the Administration of State Property) started, with the goal of the creation of the table for the urbanization.

Finally, in 2008, the legislator De Filippo presented the project for the urbanization of the neighbourhood.

The Villa 31 growth after 2000 was outstanding, and nowadays it continues to be the most desirable area for new immigrants: an informal rental market drives the villa's life, with rent values at times even comparable to the formal outlying areas of the city.

In the Latin American context, Argentina has gone through one of the most violent and repressive dictatorships. This has strongly marked all generations.⁶²

During this evolution process we can list three different modalities of access to the *villa*.

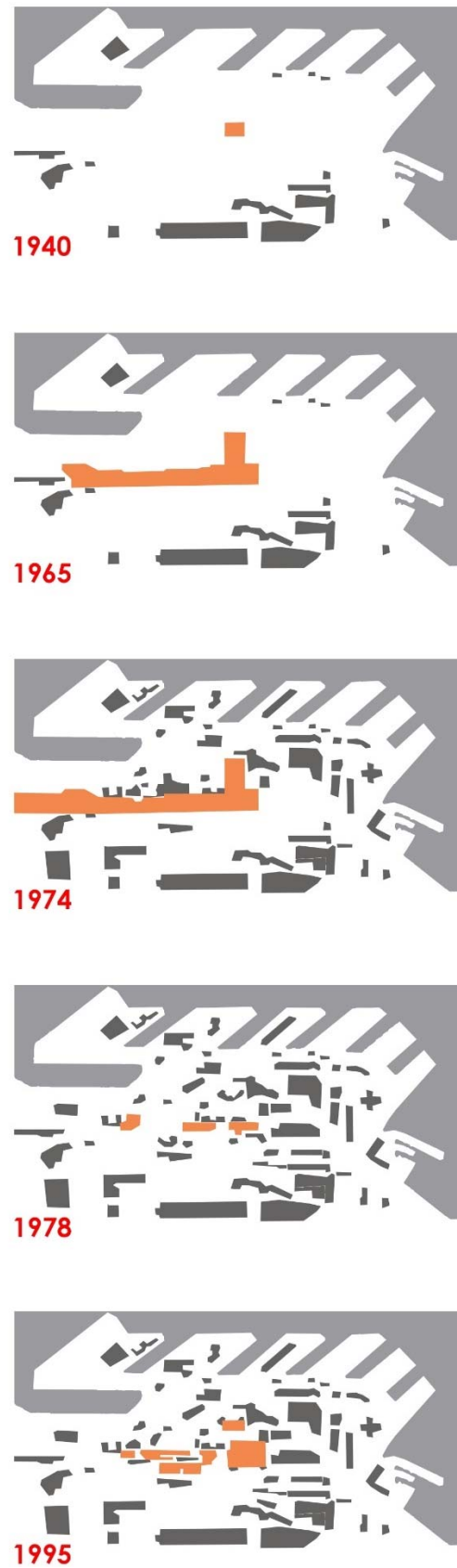
The first and more common modality of access until the middle of the 1990s was through the occupation of an empty lot, the self-construction of the house with temporary material (wooden box, sheet or cardboard), later followed by the self-construction of household with permanent material (masonry) and finally the housing improvements (ceramics, finishes, painting).

The second modality, starting from the migratory processes that took place since the mid-1990s was characterized by the co-habitation in the house of relatives as the first place to inhabit in the city, followed by the rent of a room and purchase of a dwelling constructed with permanent material and the beginning of a process of expansion or self-construction.

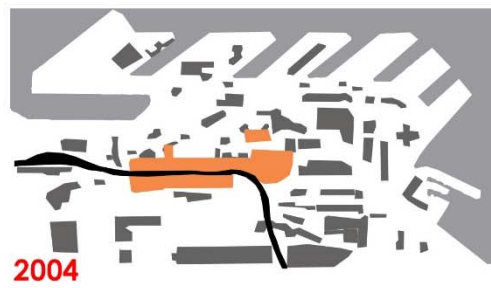
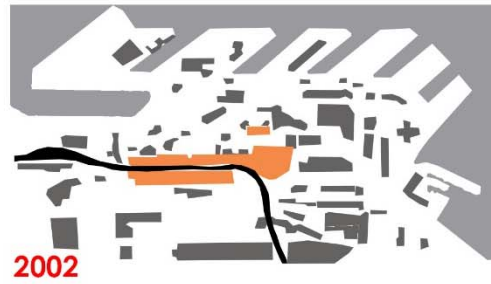
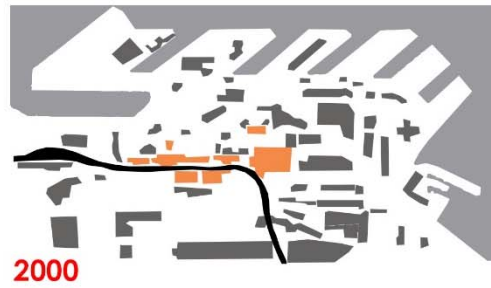
The third mode was developed by the people arriving from the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires. First, they rent a hotel room pension as the first place in the city, then they purchase a unfinished dwelling constructed with permanent material or a precarious house, ultimately they begin a process of expansion or self-construction with successive expansions and improvements.⁶³

⁶² Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 78-83.

⁶³ Cravino, M. (2009). *Vivir en la villa: relatos, trayectorias y estrategias habitacionales*. Los Polvorines: Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, p. 170-173.



18. Maps of the historical evolution of Villa 31 (in orange), from 1940 to 1995.



19. Maps of the historical evolution of Villa 31 (in orange), from 2000 to 2008.

						
1930	1940	1958	1962	1963/1964	1968	1968/1964
European immigrants arrived to Argentina	Formation of "Inmigrantes" neighbourhood (italians)	First organizations of the villeros	The first neighborhoods were formed: Guemes, Comunicaciones, Saldias, YPF	The municipality recognized the neighborhood organizations	The council of delegates was created	The lawyers J. Sobeles and R. Guevara began to work in the villa with the Father Mugica
The Villa 31 arose						
"Villa Desocupacion"						
						
1971	1974	1976	1977/1979	1983	1984	1989
Lightning lines were made	11 May Father Mugica assassinated by AAA	Military dictatorship began	Most of the families of the villa were evicted	The military dictatorship ended	Emitted laws that forbid the informal settlements	Decree 1001: granted the ownership of the land to the inhabitants
	Eradication Plan of the villa started	The government ordered the slum-clearance	48 families resisted	The process of repopulation of the villa began		
	Some neighbours transferred to Ciudadela					
						
1990/1995	1998	2001/2002	2005	2006	2007	2008
Villa 31 crossed by highway Illia	Law 148: established the urbanization of all the villas	Social outbreak and brutal repression during De La Rúa government	Created the team of delegates of Villa 31 Bis	March to Plaza de Mayo	Struggling to get line phones	Project for the urbanization presented by De Filippo
Origin of Villa 31 Bis					Started the meetings with ONABE	

20. Evolution map of Villa 31

3.1.3 URBAN AND SOCIAL POLICIES APPLIED IN VILLA 31

After the development and incipient organization of Villa 31 in 1966 the government started to talk about the plan for the eradication of *emergency villas*. The first attempt to eradicate the slums of Buenos Aires was the Emergency Villas Eradication Plan – PEVE (Plan de Erradicación de Villas de Emergencia), developed during the presidency of Illia in 1970. The plan proposed rehousing 56.000 families. The methods of eradication were extremely violent: fires, destroyed goods, police raids and people sprayed with insecticides when being transported in trucks.

Within the PEVE, the Medium-Term Plan (Plan de Mediano Plazo) created in 1972, was intended to eradicate the whole Villa 31: it promised to build 5.170 houses in two years and the cost would have been 98.000.000 pesos.

Between 1970 and 1973, 480 people (100 families) were eradicated from Villa 31, this number was not so significant in relation to the whole *villa*: in 1971 there were 24.385 neighbours in the Villa 31.

With the dictatorship in 1976 began a terrible period for the country and even more terrible for the most deprived and unprotected sectors. The political referents in the neighbourhood disappeared. Later, with the ordinance 33.625/77, issued by the then Mayor Cacciatore, began another plan to eradicate emergency *villas*. This plan was even more violent than the previous one and even its structure responded more to a military strategy than to a housing policy. It consisted of three stages: freezing, discouragement and eradication. The first thing that was done was the destruction of businesses, health centres and schools, then the lines of light and water were disconnected.⁶⁴

The policy of establishment, as opposed to the repressive eradicating policies of the last military dictatorship and previous experiences, began timidly in 1983. Starting from 1989, a new establishment program of *villas* installed two processes: the concrete actions of regularization and re-urbanization of the *villas*; the constitution of organizations of the inhabitants of the *villa* as valid interlocutors (not without some conflict) necessary in the different stages and processes of the actions of domination and urban regulation of the neighbourhoods.

During the administration of Carlos Grosso, from 1989, with a certain political synchrony between the municipal government and the *villero's* movement, the orientation towards the establishment was deepened, framed in a national policy of reform of the state. Accordingly, to this program the tenants were supposed to sit face to face with the officials to participate in the design of the policies.⁶⁵

During the management of Saul Bouer, between 1992 and 1994 there was a process of transition towards a more clearly "top-down" process. During this management, a differential treatment was started towards Villa 31. Three elements modified the scenario of this *villa*: the construction of a highway by the company Covimet (CMV), the action of the Arraigo Program that proposed a process of eradication by small groups in Villa 31 and the appearance of a mega-project on the Retiro Area.

In Villa 31 the program of Grosso's administration first began to operate, then the Arraigo Program and finally the "motorway-sector" was eradicated by the CMV.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Daich Varela, L. (2013). *Experiencias de erradicación, relocalización y resistencia en la Villa 31 de Retiro durante la década del '70*. Proyecto De Investigación: "Modos De Producción Del Hábitat Popular. Análisis De Los Conjuntos De Vivienda Realizados Por Cooperativas De Las Villas De Buenos Aires Junto A Los Curas Villeros. El Caso De La Cooperativa Copacabana De La Villa 31" FADU, p. 28-29.

⁶⁵ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 32-33.

⁶⁶ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 34-37.

In fact, during the administration of Carlos Grosso there was a certain political synchrony between the municipal government and the *villero* movement. A program for the establishment of *villas* in the Federal Capital was created, where the *villeros* sat face to face with the officials to participate in the design of the policies: viability, sustainability, opening of streets and construction of new housing seemed to be the most important motive.

The management of Jorge Domínguez, between 1994 and 1996, can be characterized by his little predisposition to dialogue with the *villeros*. For the majority, the *villas* were one of the many forms of illegal occupation of properties that had to be prevented. For him there was nothing to negotiate. The CMV had consolidated itself as the axis of the policy towards the *villas*, it did maintenance of infrastructures, without advancing in new works or in housing construction. So, in January the conflict broke out again. Nine priests began a hunger strike, getting local politicians to deal with the issue. The *villeros* also decided to resist and go out to report the compulsory evictions, which included houses thrown down with furniture and belongings inside. The issue was taken by the media and this time turned it in favour of the *villeros*.

At the stage of the Bouer management it can be said that there was a division of tasks between the local government and the national government: the work together failed. The exit brought more problems than solutions. A Municipality that spent and did not achieve, a program that was promised and did not fulfil its goals and the *villero* movement fragmented and without finding its course, seems to be the state of question in the middle of 1996.⁶⁷

From 1996 until 2006 a stage of autonomy was inaugurated, with some limitations, in the City of Buenos Aires, with a new head of government, in this case of the radical party. During the government of Fernando De La Rúa, between 1996 and 1999 there were two bodies responsible for carrying out the policy of the *villas*: the traditional Municipal Commission of Housing CMV and the Commission of *villas* that constituted a horizontal organization. The Commission of Villas emerged from the proposal of the architect Ibáñez, of the CMV (who coordinated it since March 1997). And there began to outline the great criteria, among which we can mention the integration that occurs first with the opening of streets, which took the surrounding urban fabric, installation of all infrastructure networks, sewer, water, electric lines. It was a horizontal organization, which allowed the discussion of the different aspects involved in the treatment of the *villas*. The committee consisted of members of all executive secretariats:

⁶⁷ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 38-42.

Government, Social Promotion, Health, Culture, Industry and Commerce, Education, Economy, Production and Services and Urban Planning.⁶⁸

In 1998 the Law 148 was stated, essentially it proposed the creation of a participatory coordinating committee for the diagnosis, planning and control of sectorial policies that would promote an integral program of permanent establishment and transformation (regularization, urbanization, infrastructure and educational services, health) of the *villas*. A fundamental point of this law was to define who were the legitimate actors who would assume the representation of the *villeros*. FEDEVI (Federation of Marginalized Villas, Nuclei and Neighbourhoods) proposed that the commission would be formed by the representatives of the Executive of the City Government: ministry of government, social promotion, production and services, finance, urban planning, education and culture, health, the city bank and the Arraigo program. The representatives of the City Legislature: one deputy for each of the legislative blocks. By the neighbours: five members of the law-promoting institution.

Finally, after the session where no agreement was reached, the FEDEVI and the MVBC (Movements of Villas and Poor Neighbourhoods) negotiated and agreed to place themselves as regulators of the *villeros* organizations and thus came to the sanction of Law 148. This law was sanctioned on December 30 of 1998.

One point to consider in this law is that the integral plan of establishment should be carried out in a maximum term of 5 years. This indication in the law was the result of the critical view of the *villeros* movement to the previous efforts in terms of the implementation times of the programs. An organ derived from this law was the Villas Coordinator made up of *villeros* organizations that wished to participate, which proposed a self-managed annual expenditure plan based on a limited budget previously established in the City Government. In short, the interventions on the villas during the De La Rúa government seemed to be constituted as "drops account policy" or "contention actions".⁶⁹

In the first government of Aníbal Ibarra, between 2000 and 2003, the *villa's* issue takes another place on the agenda of the CMV, starting with the actions of opening the streets of some *villas*, the construction of houses, works of infrastructure in water and sewers. Those interventions made evident that in the agenda of the local government, the regularization of the domain would become resigned as an intervention objective. The interventions were no longer aimed at the domains, but to understand urban

⁶⁸ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 43-45.

⁶⁹ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 46-50.

integration as the opening of streets, and that consequently this would allow the entry of police, ambulances and a higher quality of life for the population involved.

In the second management of Aníbal Ibarra there was a significant change. CMV left the Housing Institute of the IVC (Institute of Housing of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires) City. According to the Law 1.251 (04/12/2003), it became the body responsible for implementing the guidelines of the City Government's housing policy, through specific housing programs for families with insufficient resources living in the city.

The specific objectives for the IVC were:

- Guarantee access to decent housing for all inhabitants of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, who are unable, for economic and social reasons, to access it in the private sector.

- Reduce the housing deficit, through active policies.

- Promote demand and stimulate the supply of housing.

- Ensure the regularization of real estate in favour of the recipients of the different operations.

- Contribute to the strengthening of the Federal Housing System, promoting the active participation of the City in the definition and implementation of joint actions with other jurisdictions.

Through the development of various programs and actions, the IVC was asked to undertake the tasks of: planning and developing plans for increasing access to housing through construction, land development and the promotion of the community life of its inhabitants; promoting demand through actions which facilitate access to housing, through credit policies; supporting and promoting self-managed and co-operative policies and actions through operatives that allow access to housing to collectively organized sectors; supporting the offer with operations that allow the development of housing plans or construction projects through financing mechanisms or co-financing with official financial institutions; planning the urbanization of *villas*, settlements and temporary housing centres; executing policies in coordination with the agencies that have competence in the Buenos Aires metropolitan area.

The program exceeds the criterion of eradication by assuming as primary responsibility the integration and transformation of the *villas* into neighbourhoods. In Villa 31 the government did not have a clear position and the urban mega-projects in the area were still pending, which would imply the eviction of

the *villa*. For this reason, the inhabitants settled in fear of eradication, also expressing the willingness to defend their rights. The organizations were looking for the establishment of the neighbourhood, the improvement of infrastructure conditions, and housing.⁷⁰

At the end of 2009, the Legislature of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires sanctioned the Law 3343, which provides for the urbanization and eradication of the constructions of Villas 31 and 31 Bis, and organized a working and participatory management table composed of the representatives of the national governments, the city, the university and the inhabitants. This law affirmed the prohibition of forced evictions, regularization of the domain, opening of streets, building appropriate infrastructures, improvement of existing housing and construction of new housing (in case of relocation).⁷¹

Considering all these past events and politics that occurred and were applied in the reality of the Villa 31 and in the other *villas* of Buenos Aires in general, we can conclude that the essential components to take in account for a good public policy are values, such as health, education, security, housing and emotional load; the importance in finding a change; the rationality of plans and programs; the factor of coercion. It seems to be a consensus around these policy principles that comes from reading the context and gathering the knowledge of similar attitudes in other different situations that obtained good results. To comfort the above facts, urban dynamics in poor areas have also found a social situation outside the Villa 31. Particular attention is paid to the poor habitats of the great South American cities with urban and social dynamics that are almost identical, with spontaneous developments of large areas of edification resulting from housing needs.

⁷⁰ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 52-59.

⁷¹ Sucari, A., Cuesta, G., Guido, M., & Larosa, V. (2014). *Hábitat Villa 31 y 31 Bis Barrio Padre Carlos Mujica*. Taller Libre De Proyecto Social, P. 55.



1970	1972	1970/1973	1976	1989	1992/1994
PEVE Emergency Villas Eradication Plan	Medium - Term Plan	480 people eradicated	Third eradication plan	Process of regularization and re-urbanization of the villas	Construction of the highway
Rehousing 56.000 families of the villas of Buenos Aires	Intended to eradicate the whole Villa 31		Mayor Cacciatore	Carlos Grosso administration	Arraigo program eradication by small groups in Villa 31
Illia presidency					Saul Bouer management



1994/1996	1996/1999	1998	2000/2003	2003	2009
Villeros decided to resist and go out to report the compulsory evictions	Commission of Villas emerged Fernando De La Rúa government	Law 148 creation of a participatory coordinating committee to promote programs for the villas	Opening streets of villas, construction of houses, works of infrastructure in water and sewers	Law 1.251 IVC became the body responsible for the city government's housing policy	Law 3343 prohibition of forced evictions

21. Urban and social politics map applied in Villa 31

3.1.4 ANALYSIS MAPS

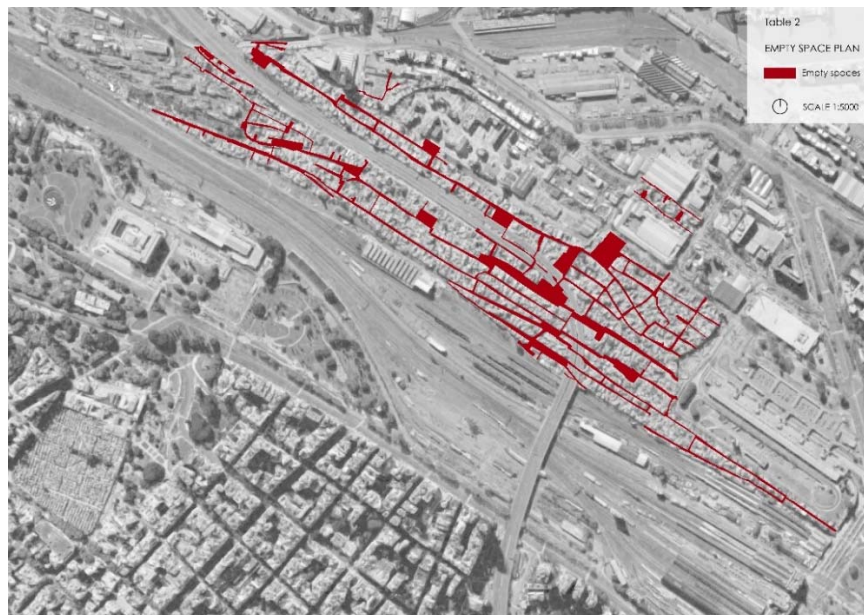
As a conclusion for this chapter some analysis maps have been done, to explain better the current situation of Villa 31, its conformation, and its reality.

The most important characteristic to be shown is the big difference that exists between the built space and the “empty” space. Comparing with the rest of the blocks of the city of Buenos Aires the density of the built space that we can notice in the *villa* is impressive. In fig. 22 the black shapes represent the houses and the commercial spaces, and in general everything that is a building. In fig. 23 the red shape represents the space that is still “empty”, like streets, squares, football fields and backyards. Passing quickly from the black-built plan to the red-empty plan it can be easily understood that this part of the city is overpopulated and overconstructed, and this situation leads to a big problem such as the lack of public space. The streets are narrow to give the space to new layers of housing, they look like corridors

for people to pass from one door to the other, and they don't look like a space where people can gather. So, this can be considered one of the main problems of this area, the lack of space for people, and the over construction of housing, every time in a smaller and denser space.



22. Built space plan of Villa 31, Annex 1 for the real scale



23. Empty space plan of Villa 31, Annex 2 for the real scale

Following the same agreement of these two plans another important one is the green spaces and squares plan, (Fig. 24) where it can be easily noticed the lack of green areas in the slum, the absence of a space to be considered as a park, the inexistence of trees or little spots where to stop to have a rest from the sun. The lack of green is maybe even worse than the lack of space, considering that all the houses are built just with bricks and concrete and no insulation is provided. Moreover, most of the streets are not paved and when they are they reflect the sun light and during the hottest hours it is almost impossible to walk around the neighbourhood. The absolute absence of trees is the first characteristic everyone notices once they step inside the *villa*. In the same map, the brown shapes represent the “squares” that now are used as spaces for the open-air market, for car parking, for Sunday celebrations and as front doors of the church and cultural/social centre. This map is a key element to understand which are the spaces up to a new proposal for the use of the space, where it would be easier to work, and these areas could become the focus of the project and of the slum.



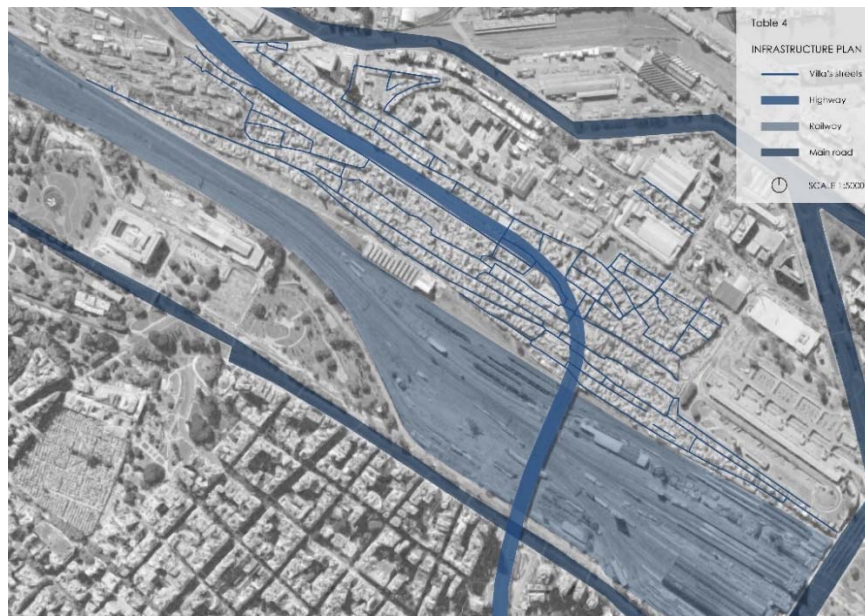
24. Green spaces and empty squares plan of Villa 31, Annex 3 for the real scale

The infrastructure plan (Fig. 26) is following the same logic of the first two plans: showing the big difference of scale. In this drawing, the four main ways of moving around the city are compared. The huge space used by the railways that end up in the Retiro terminal where three train stations are located is enhanced as well as the big line of the highway Illia, that is literally crossing the *villa*, and is the fastest way to reach the city centre of Buenos Aires by car. The main roads around Retiro, Recoleta and the port, where cars and buses are passing by are also made visible. And finally, the map shows the narrow streets of the Villa 31, that are mainly used by pedestrians and where sometimes cars are driving. This

map makes clear the location of the slums, exactly in one of the main focal points of the city, between the port, the interchange of transport and one of its richest neighbourhoods. It looks like the *villa* is disappearing under the shadow of these big infrastructures and the reality that shocks the most is the crossing of the slum by the highway as if it was in an open field.

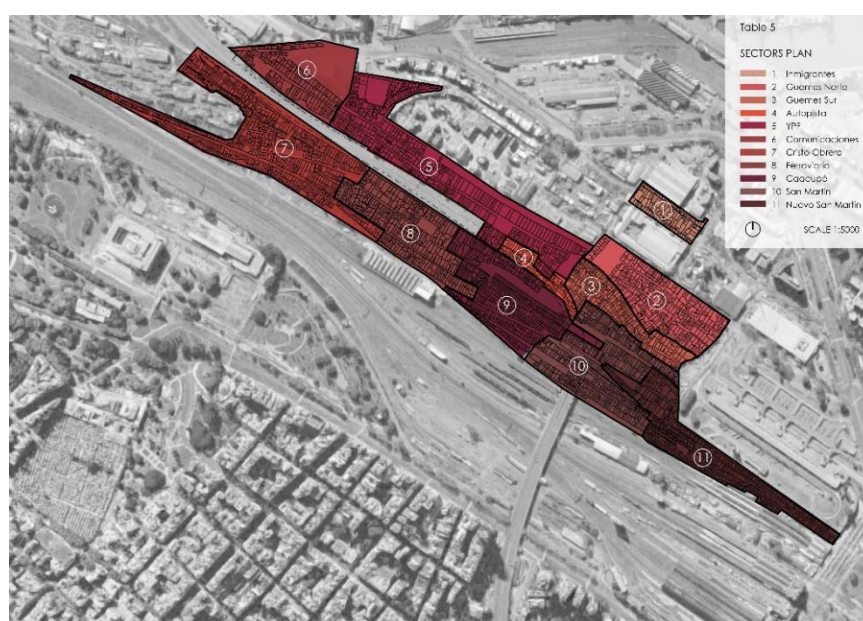


25. Arterial roads around Villa 31



26. Infrastructure plan of Villa 31, Annex 4 for the real scale

To conclude, a map with all the sectors division was made (Fig. 27), to show how many neighbourhoods exist inside the slum, and to reflect on the segregation that occurs between all the different communities that are living there. The *villa* is divided into 11 main blocks, and segregation occurs because of the different historical periods in which the sectors have formed, depending on their eradication and resistance and depending on the diverse periods of migratory flows. In Villa 31 live mainly people from Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru and Argentina, and within their neighbourhood they have created a true division, as if there were borders between one area and another; this situation embodies a problem: if the inhabitants of the *villa* don't respect each other because of different customs and traditions it becomes even more difficult their integration in the city as a formal neighbourhood. Segregation takes place not only for the different nationalities of the inhabitants, but also for the differences in the working class, and social status. For example, there are whole parts of some sectors, completely controlled by drug dealers. When you walk through the neighbourhood you can feel the people's distrust towards the stranger, and you can understand, by looking at the products sold in the stores, what's the nationality of the customer: Paraguayans will sell *yerba* for *tereré*, Argentians *yerba* for *mate*.⁷²



27. Sectors plan of Villa 31, Annex 5 for the real scale

The most critical sector is the one that is located exactly in the hearth of the slum: Autopista (highway), this name, as it was already explained, comes from the fact that in this area the houses were built directly

⁷² A typical Argentine and Paraguayan drink like a tea.

under the highway, that became their roof, and some of them are even higher and facing it. This map can be useful for working on the connection between all the blocks, maybe using the empty spaces that exist and that are crossing different parts of them.

These analysis maps were made in the easiest way as possible in order to give an idea of the space with no explanations needed, they show the problems and the potential of the villa 31, taking in consideration the surroundings as well.

As a visual analysis, it can be reported that when you enter in Villa 31, the first thing that draws your attention is the continuous musical background that accompanies you along your way. Music coming out of the shops, houses, bars, restaurants, and of the radio of the guys that gather together in the street. Music in Villa 31 never stops; days and nights are marked by a continuous and endless sound. A characteristic feature of Villa 31 is its open-air markets of food, clothing, technology, household utensils, children's toys: broken, old, new, stolen and second-hand items. Everything is sold in the street, who has something to sell has just to put a bed sheet on the floor and expose his goods. Children are everywhere; while their parents are working, they find their way to amuse themselves, they meet in the football field, or they simply put a rope on the floor to delimit a temporary playing field. The elderly people drag out of their houses the chairs on which they sat all day watching what goes on in the street.



28. The spiral stairs of Villa 31.

Finally, besides the scenario created by the way people move and live, one of the many physical elements that characterize this neighbourhood are the spiral staircases, that are today almost an emblem of the Villa 31. Almost all the constructions that have gained height in the last years have attached one or more of these stairs on the exterior facade. They are narrow and flimsy, and already very risky; you can see kids hanging on them to play and house owners sat there looking at what's happening outside.

3.2 PEOPLE: OCCUPANTS AND TENANTS

The population living in Villa 31 was changing over time. Between 1976 and 1980 there was a sharp drop of the population due to the plan of eradication of the military government. This plan involved the systematic relocation of the *villa's* population framed with the slogan “beautify the city and create a better image” for foreigners visiting the country in 1978, when the world championship of football was being carried out.⁷³



29. Street market inside of Villa 31, Elena Parnisari.

⁷³ Cravino, M. (2011). *Structural transformation of slums in Buenos Aires*. Universidad Nacional De General Sarmiento, p. 3.

In 2009 26.403 inhabitants were living in Villa 31, now they are more than 35.000 coming from the northern regions of Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru. In the last 10 years, due to the population growth and the scarcity of vacant land, there was a great densification of the tissue; the constructed lots forced a vertical growth that adds serious problems of ventilation and illumination.⁷⁴

The population of the *villa* is growing because of the new generations that need more houses and territory, along with the arrival of national and foreign newcomers; at the same time, the overall process of evictions of occupied houses increased in the last decade, while some retaining policies were dismantled and better choices were not generated, but instead, it forced more people to live into the *villas*. The evictions of small and poorly organized *villas*, generated the same growth process in bigger ones, where the displaced stayed.⁷⁵

For people to organize around a community project and get involved in it, there must be an issue that agglutinates and mobilizes the population and it should be perceived as a common problem, uniting the will of the different social actors. The feeling of rootedness added to the idea of the right to stay in the space they inhabit, within the City of Buenos Aires, presents the neighbourhood as the only possibility to consider. Housing is the space where services obtained from paid work and the policies developed by the state and private institutions are distributed, the houses family life is the setting in which the different activities carried out by the domestic unit are developed. Resources may be monetary or constitute direct goods and services. These resources are obtained through the networks created by the families within the neighbourhood. Monetary resources are derived from the remuneration received, at best, from stable employment. Another means for obtaining monetary resources refers to the execution of informal work, mostly transitory and fluctuating, or the entry into work plans carried out by various institutions.

Regarding the concept of housing, it is necessary, in housing policies, to abandon the concept of housing as the object home, that is, as the most inexpensive way to introduce a program of minimum square meters with different degrees of privacy. Capable housing should instead be understood as a process around a space, which includes the physical, social and environmental ranges, in which the essentials of life, including the self-realization of the single (experience of work, education, recreation, backwater, privacy, family) access to basic goods and services and a proper socio-cultural environment.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Sucari, A., Cuesta, G., Guido, M., & Larosa, V. (2014). *Hábitat Villa 31 y 31 Bis Barrio Padre Carlos Mujica*. Taller Libre De Proyecto Social, P. 55.

⁷⁵ Cravino, M. (2011). *Structural transformation of slums in Buenos Aires*. Universidad Nacional De General Sarmiento, p. 7-8.

⁷⁶ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 66-71.

In this term, we can conclude saying that the affected must be part of the resolution, since only the individual can define what is needed, the users must be the protagonist of the production process. The policies shouldn't be limited only to deliver houses, but they need to link them to strategies of social inclusion, access to work, health, education, culture and recreation. Urbanization should be introduced as a project within the neighbourhood: when the family feels at home, in their territory, homes can be improved with minimal economic resources. While walking in Villa 31 you can see that each family has a different house, because they built their houses by themselves. The overall image gives the idea of a neighbourhood in movement, that grows, that changes, that is alive. There is a mix of constructions of very good quality and very bad materials, single-storey houses and three-storey houses, better and worse ventilated. Forthcoming ways of addressing the topic of urbanization should consider improving the existing houses, projecting them in the future with the characteristics of the tenants and not deliver a brand-new house, with no history and soul. Furthermore, the critiques and debate around house provision is not only about those last concepts, but rather the contestation to processes of relocation to areas where the conditions may be great disadvantages, such as the location in peripheries with difficulties in transport and lower access to job and sales opportunities.

3.2.1 DATA

According to John Bartlett, between 2009 and 2013, the population of Villa 31 more than doubled.

The census carried out in March 2009 by the general direction of statistics and censuses of the Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires accounted for a total of 7.950 households and 24.030 people residing in Villas 31 and 31 Bis.

The population is distributed in the 0,32 km² that occupy the two villas resulting in a density of 85.171 inhabitants per km².

The composition by age of the population of the Villa 31 and 31 Bis is much younger than the total of the city of Buenos Aires. The average age of residents is 23,3 years, almost 16 years younger than in the City. In Villas 31 and 31 Bis, the under-30s account for almost 68% of the population, while in the City this group represents less than 40%. Particularly noteworthy are the first decade (0 to 9 years) and the third (20 to 29 years) as they are proportionally more numerous: 23,8% and 24,6%, respectively. On the other hand, those over 60 are only 2,1% of the total population of the two *villas*; this same group, throughout the City, has a percentage weight ten times bigger.

This great difference of the population age between the formal and the informal city is because most of the people that are living in *villas*, and coming from other countries, when they reach the age to retire, they leave the slum and go back to their country. This is the main reason why most of the *villas* population is mainly young.

More than half of the registered inhabitants were born abroad, while only 29% are native of the City of Buenos Aires. This accounts for a fundamentally immigrant population. Almost half of the foreign population reported being born in Paraguay, one third in Bolivia and less than 20% in Peru.⁷⁷

In the *villa*, there is a very disadvantageous situation regarding the level of education: almost 19% stated that they did not complete primary school and only 2,7% concluded some higher education or university studies. The differences with respect to the total of the City are broad and negative, concentrating on the categories that indicate lower level of education, while the population of the whole City is distributed, among the categories with higher level of education.⁷⁸

About the number of floors of the inhabited dwelling, the results obtained indicate that 46,8% of the dwellings are only on the ground floor, 35,7% on the ground floor and one upper floor and the remaining 17,5% two upper floors or more. In fact, in Villa 31 most of the houses are two-storey high, while in Villa 31 Bis, about 60% of the total corresponds to ground floor dwellings only.⁷⁹ 64,3% of households surveyed have piped water inside the dwelling. The remaining 35,7% lack this basic service, indicating a significant proportion of households that do not have minimum levels of sanitation and household welfare.⁸⁰

As for the occupancy of housing, 76,9% of households declared to be the owner, 15,7% to be the tenant, 5,9% the occupant per loan and 1,1% the occupant without authorization. It is necessary to clarify that, due to the characteristics of the residence in *villas*, the condition of owner only includes the dwelling

⁷⁷ Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (2009). *Censo de hogares y población Villas 31 y 31 Bis*. Dirección General De Estadística Y Censos. Ministerio De Hacienda, p. 6-8.

⁷⁸ Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (2009). *Censo de hogares y población Villas 31 y 31 Bis*. Dirección General De Estadística Y Censos. Ministerio De Hacienda, p. 12.

⁷⁹ Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (2009). *Censo de hogares y población Villas 31 y 31 Bis*. Dirección General De Estadística Y Censos. Ministerio De Hacienda, p. 14.

⁸⁰ Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (2009). *Censo de hogares y población Villas 31 y 31 Bis*. Dirección General De Estadística Y Censos. Ministerio De Hacienda, p. 15.

(and not the land), which implies a precarious situation of residential stability beyond the form of declared occupation.⁸¹

According to a survey developed in Villa 31 and Villa 20 in 2006, the average income of the households that lived in different conditions was: for the renters \$ 665,60, for those who had bought a dwelling in the neighbourhood in the last year \$ 842,10 and for those who were selling their dwelling of the *villa* \$ 618,50. Meanwhile, renting a studio was at that time between \$ 600 and \$ 800. Thus, the families who lived in the *villas* could not pay the rent or if they had done so they could not have had money to feed themselves, get dressed, travel to work, buy medicines and tools. In this way, we must understand the growth of the *villas* on the need to obtain a place in the city for the lower income sectors, near the work, study and health areas, and next to the networks of family and friends that will help in times of need.⁸²

⁸¹ Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (2009). *Censo de hogares y población Villas 31 y 31 Bis*. Dirección General De Estadística Y Censos. Ministerio De Hacienda, p. 17.

⁸² Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 29.

4

ACT

Act: to do something for a particular purpose or to solve a problem, to have an effect, to behave in the stated way.

Learning to come closer to the topic. Taking advantage of the various methods.

“Aprender que nada es estático, que afortunadamente no hay última palabra ni última configuración, que el Proyecto es proyecto porque mira siempre hacia adelante, en rigor porque avizora -sin muchas pretensiones- lo que está detrás del horizonte.” (Doberti, 2010).⁸³

For the purpose of the thesis is necessary to think about design and urbanism as instruments of physical connectivity and social inclusion: the vision of urbanism through housing. It should be clear that informality is not a negation of planning, but is a different way of planning with a different systematic logic. For the proposal of Villa 31 the idea is to appropriate the urban public space in a playful way, strengthening the public-private partnerships and understanding the value of use and the value of money. The objective of the research is to introduce and enhance its generic values of applicability as a prefiguration of possible scenarios of urban transformation.

⁸³ "Learning that nothing is static, that fortunately there is no last word or final configuration, that the Project is a project because it always looks forward, strictly because it sees - without many pretensions - what is behind the horizon."

4.1 METHODOLOGIES FOR PARTICIPATIVE SPACES

“Toda elaboración teórica, de acción, o de decisión política, sobre la solución habitacional, debe tener su basamento en el conocimiento profundo y constantemente actualizado de las necesidades de las personas, entendido como conocimiento construido junto con la misma gente que los padece, no sólo la de las estadísticas y de las encuestas, sino las personas concretas con nombres, rostros y diálogo, una por una, uno por uno.” (Pelli, 2006).⁸⁴

Planning and management must go together and in a continuous way, with the articulation between collective actors and the State. Three main steps must be followed in order to create good participative spaces: the preparatory stage, the implementation stage and the reformulation and adjustment stage.

In the first phase, the objective is to make the work space viable, there must be knowledge and mutual understanding between the actors, an initial exchange of information, and a training with the use of the methodology must be done.

In the second phase, it starts the planning of actions, using different techniques to complete the diagnoses and to define the strategies in a group way, at this stage, it must be identified the actions, the reasons, the objectives, the results, the participants and the informants.

In the last phase, there will be the evaluation of the results, the adjustment and reformulation of the diagnoses and the definition of new strategies.⁸⁵

One of the management models for the informal settlements is framed in the so-called "social urbanism", known as Inclusive Cities.⁸⁶ Within this framework the residents are part of the decision making on issues ranging from politics to everyday life. This form of participation generates a sense of belonging, identity and place among residents, and guarantees them a share in the benefits of urban development. Their specific interventions aim to generate public spaces of architectural and urban quality that

⁸⁴ *“All the theoretical elaboration, of the action, of the political decision, on the housing solution, must have its base in the deep knowledge and constantly updated of the needs of the people, understood like the knowledge constructed together with the same people who suffer from it, not only the statistics and the surveys, but the concrete people with names, faces and dialogue, one by one, one by one.”*

⁸⁵ Echevarria, A., Rivas, N., & José Espagnol, M. (2016). *Algunas metodologías posibles para espacios participativos*. Participación Social Y Hábitat Popular, p. 3-20.

⁸⁶ An inclusive city is one that provides opportunities and support that enables the full development of all its residents, and allows them access to decent housing, transportation, education, recreation, communication, employment and legal system, as well as a cultural and religious expression.

promote, in a sustainable way, local and social interaction; urban facilities; housing programs for high social risk communities based in areas with environmental risk.⁸⁷

To sum up it can be said that the main steps to follow in planning and management should be to inform, clarify and gather opinions about the issue; to disseminate the information; to do a presentation of the project with the participation of the public if desired; to include the population as labour to promote a self-construction process that must be spontaneous, assisted and directed.

4.1.1 METHODOLOGIES FOR VILLAS

All the actions to integrate the *villas* with the city should be based on inclusion, on the participation of the population in the decision-making processes and on spatial integration with the rest of the urban fabric. To do this, the *villas* of Buenos Aires must be recognized as a constituent part of the city, furthermore because some of them have more than 70 years of history and consolidation.

The biggest challenge is to move forward with an inclusive urban and housing policy, providing opportunities for all who inhabit it. However, for reaching this stage the state must play a central role, it should be a facilitator to consolidate the process, and it should collaborate in the participatory methodologies to build objectives to be achieved and solutions to be promoted; but what the state should not do is to determine how the process is implemented or to determine what are the needs and the solutions to solve them only from non-participated technical opinions; only with an inclusive look it will be possible to produce significant changes.

To recover the social and urban fabric of the *villas* sustained policies that tend to consolidate a gradual process of integration must be implemented, favouring the access of the popular sectors to a healthy and dignified environment. Some of the measures to integrate the *villas* could be the initiate regulatory processes as a starting point to consolidate the generated habitat; recover environmental conditions by eliminating sources of soil, water and air pollution; complete the infrastructure of basic urban services (water and sewage networks); favour social mix; consolidate existing streets and open new ones in order to improve accessibility and articulations with the city; guarantee accessibility to the neighbourhoods through public transportation, extending and modifying existing routes; encourage social organization

⁸⁷ Procesos de urbanización de villas de la CABA. Los casos de Villa 19-INTA, Villa 20 y Los Piletones. (2014). *Documento De Trabajo: Urbanización*, (19), p. 37-40.

and the participation of groups of different orders.⁸⁸ For the rehabilitation of the Villa 31 and Villa 31 Bis, there are common objectives that can be found in the existing projects: “Treinta y todos” for the urbanization of Villa 31, and the “Gastronomic centre” promoted by the government of Buenos Aires; the urban draft “Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica” designed by the Arch. Javier Fernandez Castro. The main objectives can be summarized in the following points according to J. Arroyo: to work with the community and learn about the housing problems of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires; to know and understand the process of social production of the habitat carried out in the neighbourhood; to know, relay, register and document the real conditions of life of the neighbourhood for the realization of the necessities program and the draft resolution; to develop the criteria for the project intervention; to contribute to the social process to achieve the urbanization of the neighbourhood; to prepare improvement proposals; to incorporate communication as an axis of analysis and work; to incorporate necessary tools for participatory work.⁸⁹

4.2 LANDSCAPE AND PUBLIC SPACE

Landscape and public space are recurrent topics in architecture that makes of them their subjects of design. Architecture confers shape to the spaces of life and by doing so defines the public space and its image. The architecture importance relates with the possibility of contributing not only to the physical definition of the city but also to its symbolic dimension, to the construction of city imaginaries; it can propose spaces, situations, urban environments that take advantage of tensions, contradictions, strengths of places, social dynamics in progress, to promote opportunities for the public.⁹⁰ A city is the complex sum of a series of spaces that an indeterminate number of people occupy and inhabit, and where they carry out an unlimited number of activities; the cities integrate public and private spaces that interact and form a spatial as well as functional organization.

In the modern city, the public space has two main functions: circulation as the road network, and recreation as the green collective spaces, together with other functions such as commerce and celebration. The public space is complemented by public or private facilities, as they accommodate institutional functions of public interest: education, health, safety. The urban public space is the physical

⁸⁸ (aureus.com.ar), G. *Cómo integrar las villas al tejido urbano de la ciudad*. Guillermo Tella, architect + urban planner. Guilleromotella.com.

⁸⁹ Sucari, A., Cuesta, G., Guido, M., & Larosa, V. (2014). *Hábitat Villa 31 y 31 Bis Barrio Padre Carlos Mujica*. Taller Libre De Proyecto Social, P. 57.

⁹⁰ Arroyo, J. (2015). *Paisaje y espacio público: una lectura desde América Latina*. Geograficidade, 5(1), p. 36-37.

domain that characterizes and contains the material dynamics of the city, the realization of social action and the construction of an intersubjective link and manifestation of the political-ideological conflict of the society.⁹¹ The public space is the place of meeting, of marketing and of transit in a city; a place where any individual has the right to enter or remain without being excluded by personal, social or economic condition. In parks, squares, streets and other public spaces the inhabitants find themselves as equals making use of a common space: public spaces provide opportunities for social interaction and recreation.⁹² From a cultural point of view, public spaces are a central factor in the symbolic life of the city because they establish setting where the experiences and daily routines of its inhabitants converge and where community life takes place. The public spaces make the fact of living in the city a pleasant and beneficial experience: in them citizens can express themselves individually and collectively. They are ideal spaces to carry out recreational, educational, commercial and sports activities. For citizens to use and benefit from public spaces, it is essential that they provide optimal security conditions to attract them, to remain in them and to express themselves in freedom, always within a framework of mutual respect and legality. As for the classification of spaces, it is possible to make a first distinction between two types: free access places, when spaces are open and integrate public facilities; and the places of restricted access, which are the dwellings and those private spaces that are also of collective use.⁹³ The streets are the public space par excellence and its set builds the general structure of the city. The squares are those esplanades that are created within the same structure between the streets and the buildings, there are also sports spaces, designed for the development of sports or activities that demand special equipment and furniture. The green spaces like parks favour the vitality of the city, are elements that break with the visual monotony of the buildings and offer a high contrast in the stage that is the city.⁹⁴

Landscape and public space are the central concepts of urban planning. The legitimacy of landscape is in the hands of individuals and not just the specialists responsible for studying, representing or describing a landscape. It is the inhabitants of the landscape such as local communities and social groups who designate them as they inhabit. They do so whenever significant elements of the environment are selected and integrated into a block between objective and emotional decisions.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Arroyo, J. (2015). *Paisaje y espacio público: una lectura desde América Latina*. Geograficidade, 5(1), p. 25.

⁹² Gonzalez Gomez, V. (2014). *La construcción e integración social a través del color en los espacios públicos*. Escuela Técnica Superior De Ingeniería Del Diseño, p. 23-24.

⁹³ Gonzalez Gomez, V. (2014). *La construcción e integración social a través del color en los espacios públicos*. Escuela Técnica Superior De Ingeniería Del Diseño, p. 24.

⁹⁴ Gonzalez Gomez, V. (2014). *La construcción e integración social a través del color en los espacios públicos*. Escuela Técnica Superior De Ingeniería Del Diseño, p. 25-26.

⁹⁵ Arroyo, J. (2015). *Paisaje y espacio público: una lectura desde América Latina*. Geograficidade, 5(1), p. 32-33.

A public space that is not pleasant and does not help the interaction of citizens will eventually be abandoned and will eventually degrade, becoming a focus of insecurity for neighbours. The degradation of public spaces is directly proportional to the emergence of troubled or abandoned neighbourhoods, which in turn leads to problems of urban and social violence. The abandonment of public spaces may be associated to different factors. One of them may have to do with a bad location or a difficult access. Spaces with very narrow entrances or located between dangerous roads usually do not attract citizens, therefore these places with so little civic activity are perceived as unsafe areas. In many cases, this little influx makes it easier for a group to take its place as its own and to generate behaviours that are not sociable or that lead to delinquency, which in turn increases the sense of insecurity among citizens. The lack of adequate furniture and facilities and their maintenance may be another factor leading to the abandonment of public areas. In this case, the failure of public space may be due to a lack of basic comfort elements such as seats or areas to guard against rain or the sun. Public spaces play a crucial role in facilitating community interaction: they can create a sense of place in which community life develops. A good public space cannot be measured solely by its physical attributes, its function must be more important than its form: the community must be a source of inspiration for the public space so that citizens feel it as theirs. A project for a public space should seek to generate a place at the service of the local society and its variety of interests, with a clear social function. A public space should take advantage of the assets of the local community, be inspired by it and harness its potential to create public space that promotes health, happiness and people's wellbeing.⁹⁶

4.3 PRINCIPLES FOR PRACTICE

In the scope of the present thesis three main principles can be adapted for the urban planning policy. In order to identify a technique of action to face the lack of urban planning within the poor habitats, which is direct and effective, the three principles that John F. C. Turner pointed out in his "Housing by people" were taken as a reference. The purpose is to adapt these practices to the case study, to achieve a successful social urban intervention.

The first principle is the necessity of self-government in local affairs; the principle of local and personal freedom to build must be maintained and the most important proposal is to increase communication between people in action. The second one establishes the necessity for using the least necessary power,

⁹⁶ Gonzalez Gomez, V. (2014). *La construcción e integración social a través del color en los espacios públicos*. Escuela Técnica Superior De Ingeniería Del Diseño, p. 27-28.

weight, and size of tools for the job. The third principle affirms that planning is an essentially legislative, limit setting function, and must cease to be confused with design.⁹⁷

According to John F.C.T the first proposal is to set up an international communications network to intensify the use of existing channels of communication, formal and informal, in ways that increase universal access and reduce the risks of exploitation by centralizing powers. The second proposal is to set up several centres where case materials will be collected and made available to those needing access to the precedents set. All such centres will be interconnected so that anyone can search the rest for documents or topics. The third proposal is to institute a new school of the built environment, to establish the fact that there is such a school and that it exists by many scattered individuals and a few groups and small organizations. The medium of the school is the international communications network. Those who accept the principles in general will also agree that significant housing action by central agencies is necessarily in the legislative sphere.⁹⁸

The essential differences between action, information, theory and law must also be recognized. Actions and information are time and place specific, when doing an intervention, it must be taken in account the location with its history and characteristics and the time period in which I am executing a program or a policy, in order to propose a specific plan. Conversely, theory and law must be general to be useful when trying to answer the need to apply a policy to an overall topic. Furthermore, an urban planning plan must be implemented for each specific urban area, taking into account even issues at anthropic level.

A social urban intervention will have as main objectives the prevention of violent or antisocial behaviour and the improvement of the quality of life through the protection, conservation and use of public spaces. Together with the revitalization of a public space, it will improve the quality of life of citizens, especially those who live close to that space. This will in turn allow the neighbourhood in which transformations occur to resume social, cultural, sports and recreational activities.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Turner, J. (1977). *Housing by people* (1st ed.). New York: Pantheon Books, p. 162.

⁹⁸ Turner, J. (1977). *Housing by people* (1st ed.). New York: Pantheon Books, p. 163-166.

⁹⁹ Gonzalez Gomez, V. (2014). *La construcción e integración social a través del color en los espacios públicos*. Escuela Técnica Superior De Ingeniería Del Diseño, p. 29-30.

4.4 TACTICAL URBANISM

“Una revolución en cualquier dominio que sea, pasa por una liberación previa de una energía de deseo”¹⁰⁰ (n.d.)



30. Example of a tactical urbanism solution.

Tactical urbanism is a public planning process and it is intended as term actions, based on the needs of the city inhabitants. There is a complementarity between tactic and strategy in urbanism. The first one corresponds to punctual, fragmentary and contingent actions that work with the circumstance of the moment, transforming it into opportunity, using the available materials in that precise period; the tactic privileges the particular time and the process. The second one aims at long-term objectives, control of circumstances, the inscription of a proper order in space and seeks to establish a continuity beyond the effects of a precise time. A tactical approach refers to a method used to achieve goals; it is an isolated action that benefits from opportunities offered by the context. A strategic approach relies on the description of a long-term action plan used to set up and then coordinate different actions aimed at achieving a predetermined goal, although the outcome might be uncertain.

¹⁰⁰ “A revolution, in every domain it can be, pass through a previous liberation of an energy desire”

The best part about this urban planning technique is that it is fast and not necessarily permanent, yet tactical actions may produce long-term impacts. It is surely not the only answer and option, but where it improves lives, it certainly shouldn't be discouraged.¹⁰¹ Tactical urbanism is grounded upon participatory democracy, it aims to promote social cohesion, and it is not formally preprogrammed in advance or from above; it is the way of providing urban change carried out by residents in their own neighbourhoods or communities, with their own hands. In the specific case of the slums of the big cities, which have been built by the residents themselves, without help from governments, planners or designers, the aim of this approach is to enable people to find better solutions for the space that they occupy and become active citizens.¹⁰² Tactical urbanism is a deliberate approach to processes of city-making that instigate the change, it offers local ideas for local planning challenges, it is developed in a short-term and with realistic expectations, it has low-risks with a possibly high reward, and it represents the development of social capital between citizens, public/private institutions, non-profit/NGO's, and their constituents. Tactical urbanism can also be used to simply build public awareness, to identify a small but pressing issue and to build trust amongst disparate interest groups.¹⁰³ Lastly, the goal of a tactical urbanism project is often to test a design in the short-term that may later become permanent, so it's not necessary to use long-lasting materials from the beginning.



31. Tactical urbanism on crosswalk, Oakville.

¹⁰¹ Flint, A. (2017). *At MoMA, How 'Tactical Urbanism' Can Preserve the Future of Cities*. CityLab. Available at: www.citylab.com

¹⁰² Rosa, M., Weiland, U., Álvarez, A., Bush, L., Mutman, D. and Shankar, P. (2013). *Handmade urbanism*. 1st ed. Berlin: Jovis, p. 10.

¹⁰³ Lyndon, M., Bartman, D., Garcia, T., Preston, R., & Woudstra, R. (2012). *Tactical urbanism 2*. 1st ed. United States, p. 1-2.

*“Tactical urbanism promotes the social justice in the appropriation of urban space, it presents a broad range of emergent, provisional, experimental, and ad hoc urban projects. It is mobilized from below, through organizationally, culturally, and ideologically diverse interventions to confront emergent urban issues, its generative sources lie outside the control of experts or any specific institution, social class, or political coalition and points toward alternative urban futures based on grassroots democracy and social justice. Tactical urbanism proposes immediate modes of intervention in relation to local issues that are viewed as extremely urgent by its proponents, and it is often presented as an open-source model of action and as a form of re-appropriation of urban space by its users.”*¹⁰⁴

This public planning process may more quickly build trust amongst disparate interest groups and community leaders. Tactical urbanism can be used to simply build public awareness, to identify a small but pressing issue, upgrading derelict spaces into more harmonious and beautiful places, creating qualities that forge encounters and coexistence, and transform residents’ perceptions of everyday life¹⁰⁵

To sum up it can be said that this urban planning approach is a voluntary construction inside the city that combines tactic and strategy at the same time. The strategy results as the transformations of history into readable spaces take place, that can be exploit on benefits, prepare for future expansions, and gain independence in terms of variability of circumstances. The tactic is the art of the weak, it operates in set by set, blow for blow, it creates surprises and it can be where no one expects it. The key factor is the short-term activity that implies low-cost activities and a low risk of failure. The main concept beyond tactical urbanism is to keep the identity of the neighbourhood and of the city, potentiating the public space as a space of relation. Furthermore, the most important to keep in mind is that the government has to play the role of the promoter and not of the constructor.

Tactical urbanism is intended to connect people on their creative side, sharing their ideas with the community. This tactic, in the specific case of the application in a slum or in a poor area, takes advantage of all the complexity that exists in that fragile environment in order to cover it as a social transformer. Some solutions that could be applied in the case of Villa 31 will be presented and detailed in the following chapters.

¹⁰⁴ Post.at.moma.org. (2017). *Is “Tactical Urbanism” an Alternative to Neoliberal Urbanism?* |post. Available at: www.post.at.moma.org

¹⁰⁵ Lyndon, M., Bartman, D., Garcia, T., Preston, R., & Woudstra, R. (2012). *Tactical urbanism 2*. 1st ed. United States, p. 1-2.

One of the most important action to be done in a public space is to make a seat, to build an attractive bench and place it where it's needed for people to gather together in a common space; in some cases, mobile furniture's could also work.

Vegetation is another important component to take into account while planning a space, plant a tree it gives shade, serenity, qualifies place's image, grantees visual and physical comfort to the users of the site. A social garden can be planned, implemented with the ideas of urban farm, local production, food bank, vertical garden and urban orchard. This topic goes together with the issue of rainwater collection and water recycling.

A special attention should be paid to the younger and older community: a kid's club could be designed, playgrounds and sport facilities, a co-working space, and some small free libraries could be placed around the district to stimulate learning, and to bring the elders together with the youngest to guarantee an informal but very interesting mutual assistance. Indeed, the working spaces could be used by the first as a place where to study and by the second as a place of meeting and relax, where to read newspapers and books. In the playground, there should be adequate urban furniture, where parents and grandparents can sit and rest watching their children playing.



32. Tactical urbanism movement: the umbrella sky project

Another important issue is how the pathways are treated: the crosswalks could be redesigned with colourful paints in order to qualify its image, to increase the pedestrian visibility and feeling of safety, the asphalt could be decorated with acrylic paint, some alleys could be transformed in a public open air art studio with graffiti, and colourful canvases could be used to give shade to the streets.

These are just a few and quite simple proposals of what could be done to improve a public space in a short period of time and with a low money expenditure.

"Instead of feeling threatened by a planet of slums in need of clearance, we believe in a planet of neighbourhoods and habitats in different stages of evolution." (Flint, 2017)

5

DEMONSTRATE

Demonstrate: to show or make something clear, to show something and explain how it works.

Explain, teach and show. To support the validity of a thesis one needs to check whether there are experiments or models already made in this regard. Analyse and study the examples is fundamental to verify their truthfulness and effectiveness, and if they meet the goals of our research. Ultimately this process enables us to rethink them and use them as case studies to adapt to our research needs.

5.1 EXAMPLES OF SOLUTIONS IN SOUTH AMERICA

In the following chapters, will be presented four cases that were selected as examples of good solutions for public spaces improvement in the poorest regions of South American cities. The examples that have been chosen are located in Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay and Venezuela.

In the first case, an art/architecture intervention in one of the biggest slums of São Paulo is presented to show how the streets, the houses, the floor and the walls of a neighbourhood can look more attractive and safer just by considering the use of colours. New perspectives and points of view are created, to invite those who walk and live in these places to pay attention to their surroundings and to “de-stigmatize” and change the image to the outside.

The second case corresponds to a public transport solution in a poor neighbourhood of Medellin to improve the circulation within an area where there was a lack of connections to the city’s public transport network. This example illustrates the importance that the public infrastructure system has inside of a big city, a good transport network can change the daily life of the inhabitants enhancing its quality, which

is reflected in the decrease of commuting time and easiness to reach places, but it also enriches the sense of inclusion in the community.

The third case reflects on the treatment of an outdoor public space in the city of Remansito, primarily intended to be used by children. This specific example shows the process of participation and of active decision making of the community. When you are donating a space to the people, it is fair that its users must be the ones to think, to idealize, to shape and to create that space, according to their needs. The architect or the artist must be guided by the needs of the community, instead of imposing its own methodology or vision.

The last case, displays the use of buildings that works as a vertical public space, in the main cities of Venezuela, adapting to specific areas. This is also an important example that shows how the meaning of the term public space can be more flexible, and can adapt to the situations and environments where you have to work on it. This case demonstrates furthermore the importance of sport in the daily life of people, and how it helps the community to gather together and to focus their attention on safe and healthy activities.

5.1.1 LUZ NAS VIELAS, BOA MISTURA, 2012. BRAZIL, SÃO PAULO.

The collective of artists Boa Mistura, was born in Madrid in 2001 from the work of 5 artists: Pablo Ferreira (Arkon), Juan Jaume (Derko), Javier Serrano (Pahg), Pablo Puron (Purone) and Ruben Martin (rDick). Their name comes from the Portuguese “good mix”, since it is composed by an architect, an engineer, a journalist and two students of fine arts. Their best works can be seen in Berlin, Norway, São Paulo and Panama City. Luz Nas Vuelas (Light In The Alleys) is a project from Boa Mistura realized in 2012 in the alleys and stairways of the slum Vila Brasilândia, in the north-west periphery of the city of São Paulo in Brazil. These artists from Madrid involved the inhabitants of the favela in their project, which mainly consisted in painting the walls and the streets of the neighbourhood with 5 monochrome bright colours, creating specific words corresponding to a specific topic: Beleza (beauty), Firmeza (firmness), Orgulho (pride), Doçura (sweetness) and Amor (love). Despite the visual poverty of the favelas, there is a beautiful landscape beyond the hills and this aesthetic quality was enhanced by the intervention through the commitment of a requalification of the place that, thanks to the physical and emotional involvement of the inhabitants, gave the artists the power to achieve the final objective. The initiative of the group, as the revaluation of the territory, implied guaranteeing that the project didn't require large economic resources for its realization. The project launches a warning, a scream

represented by the very strong colours and the written words that emerge on the steps, on the windows and on the walls. The participation of children was of fundamental importance: they became authors and spectators of change; they participated in a real urban environment transformation turning their home into a more joyful reality in which to live. Colours, lights and involvement are the key ingredients that were used to uplift the people from their situation of poverty, and constitute messages of hope in a place where violence has become a life system, in which the inhabitants breathe a terrifying atmosphere.¹⁰⁶



33. Perspective of the urban intervention Luz Nas Velas, Boa Mistura

¹⁰⁶ Capiotti, G. and Coltrinari, F. (2014). *Periferie. Dinamiche economiche territoriali e produzione artistica*. Il Capitale culturale. Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage, 10, p. 844-846.

After a previous study and analysis, actions were defined for the alleys that serve as connecting elements in the urban fabric known as "vuelas". Magenta, cyan, emerald green, pistachio green and yellow were the colours chosen to support the words written in white on the coloured walls of the narrow streets (Fig. 33-34). The project was developed with the collaboration of the neighbours, in order to create a sense of belonging in the community and inspire their lives. The children of the *favela* were the main protagonists, because they were the ones who, directed by the group Boa Mistura, painted their streets among music, laughter and joy.¹⁰⁷ (Fig. 35)



34. Urban intervention Luz Nas Vuelas, Boa Mistura

¹⁰⁷ Gonzalez Gomez, V. (2014). *La construcción e integración social a través del color en los espacios públicos*. Escuela técnica superior de ingeniería del diseño. Universidad Politécnica de Valencia., Trabajo final de grado, p. 40-41.

Boa Mistura understands urban art as a tool to change and dynamization, to achieve the metamorphosis of a community; they want the people who live daily in these spaces to feel integrated and part of the project. For its execution was chosen the technique of anamorphs in which you deform an image in 3D space in such a way that it is only correctly seen from a particular perspective. The group focus their projects in the so-called “non-places”, those spaces of passage and without a clear and historical character that makes them easily identifiable. This contemporary concept tries to describe urban and non-urban spaces that lack a clear identity, but which, however, are experienced daily by many people: inside them, the individuality of each user gains strength and magnifies any artistic manifestation that tries to fix a physical and a sensitive referent that transform the space, since they work like a blank canvas. These are spaces of reflection, which despite being used, are not normally lived and valued as such places, but people give to them other meanings or uses and forget their reflection function. Some examples of non-places, considering this kind of approach, would be road nodes, collective transportation stations, industrial urban areas, the streets, the empty lots of an urban plot, the railways.¹⁰⁸



35. Involvement of children in the urban intervention Luz Nas Velas, Boa Mistura

¹⁰⁸ Amparo, M. (2016). *Urban land art. Estudio de casos*. Escuela Técnica superior de Arquitectura. Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, Trabajo final de grado, p. 13.

5.1.2 METROCABLE, URBAN DEVELOPMENT ENTERPRISE, 2004. COLOMBIA, MEDELLIN

The local government of the city of Medellin, in Colombia, decided to interconnect the Metro and introduced a new system called the Metrocable, a cable-car system integrated with the Metro public transport. This aerial massive transportation system was inaugurated in 2004 and nowadays is used daily by ca. 67.000 people.



36. Medellin Metrocable, "The Gondola Project".

The Integral Urban Project of Medellin City in Colombia (PUI- Proyecto Urbano Integral), developed by the Urban Development Enterprise (EDU), had the aim to connect by air the informal urban sector known as *comuna nororiental* located at the north-eastern hilly area by a mono-cable gondolas system, with a capacity of 10 people per gondola and with a total installed capacity of 3.000 people per hour. The territory of this *comuna* is characterized by an intricate topography, without good transportation systems and the presence of hundreds of squats that have formed illegal settlements. So, the introduction of this system in one of the most marginalized areas of the country was the beginning of a physical and social transformation within the area. Before this transport system, the inhabitants of the peripheral neighbourhoods needed to walk long routes before reaching the metro or the buses stops: with this project, the transport gap was clearly reduced.¹⁰⁹ The Metrocable reduced the travel time from the upper parts of the city to the metro system at the lower valley near the river from more than one hour to just

¹⁰⁹ Blanco, C. & Kobayashi, H. (2009). *Urban transformation in slum districts through public space generation and cable transportation at north-eastern area: Medellin, Colombia*. The Journal Of International Social Research, 2(8), p. 76.

ten minutes. This system is also connected with a network of public electrical escalators at the steeper parts of the *comuna*.

After Bogota, which is the capital city of Colombia, Medellin is the second largest industrial pole of the country and leads the national energy production, as well as the banana, coffee and gold trade in the national and international markets. However, the city is divided between the population residing in the formal urban area, the Valley area, and the population that occupies some of their surrounding hills on precarious settlements.¹¹⁰ The city of Medellin has been involved in a series of economic, social and violence issues caused by drug trafficking and conflicts between communist guerrillas and paramilitaries. In 1992, the city was ranked as one of the most dangerous cities in the world. After the PUI project, the urban and social development of the city changed drastically: the number of violent incidents decreased, the unemployment rate was lower and the perception of safety increased. This change was possible through integral collaborations between planners, designers and politicians to highlight areas of the city that have been ignored before. Medellin used the strategy of combining architecture and urbanism as a tool for social development.¹¹¹



37. Aerial connections: Medellin Metrocable, "The Gondola Project".

¹¹⁰ Blanco, C. & Kobayashi, H. (2009). *Urban transformation in slum districts through public space generation and cable transportation at north-eastern area: Medellin, Colombia*. The Journal Of International Social Research, 2(8), p. 81.

¹¹¹ *Architecture In Development - news - The Urban Transformation of Medellin, Colombia*. (2017). Available at www.architectureindevelopment.org.

One of the first issues to be developed within the project was the coordination between the several public institutions called to take part, the NGOs and the Universities. Multidisciplinary groups and discussion tables were organized as a way to specify the goals and the best ways to achieve results: the community participation became almost the central axis of action, gathering their ideas in relation to their collective spaces.¹¹² The main problem in this part of the city of Medellin was basically the lack of public space and the discontinuity in the mobility network, that were associated to the low community integration, the environmental deterioration, the pedestrian insecurity and an inefficient public transport system in addition to the topographical difficulties. This *comuna* had registered the lowest rates of quality of life, the highest homicide rates in 2004 and was characterized by the overpopulation, informality and density of the settlement. The impact of the *Metro Cable* stations generated public space around them articulating pedestrian flows and public and private transport in the surrounding areas. The stations are strategic nodes of intervention in relation with a natural system composed by important streams in the area, like pedestrian bridges, urban promenades and the urban development around the metro stations, such as the “Library Reyes de España”.¹¹³ This project represents an alternative methodology to be replicated in places experiencing similar situations. Its basic planning principles were: community, territory, state, and rational investment interconnected through integral levels within all the notions.¹¹⁴

5.1.3 LA PLAZA DE NUESTROS SUEÑOS, LUKAS FUSTER, CARLOS IRIGOITA, MARTIN APONTE, 2014. PARAGUAY, REMANSITO

Un terreno fino y largo, un tercio de la plaza, en los dos tercios restantes, coexisten una cancha pública y otra "privada", ambas deportivas, dos resortes y una estructura de hamaca, sin hamaca, son la única infraestructura para niños, varios neumáticos pintados hacen de barrera para que no ingresen las motos, soportan todo juego posible, el agua recorre los perímetros de la plaza casi todo el año, industrias cerámicas de la zona proveen de escombros cerámicos a la población que se transforman en una gran vereda, en el tercio que nos toca, se encuentran varios árboles nativos, que esperan el abrazo de 1500 neumáticos en una estructura de 80 metros, que se curva para auto-soportarse, colgar los

¹¹² Blanco, C. & Kobayashi, H. (2009). *Urban transformation in slum districts through public space generation and cable transportation at north-eastern area: Medellin, Colombia*. The Journal Of International Social Research, 2(8), p. 84-85.

¹¹³ Osorio Gaviria, D. (2015). *The north-eastern urban integration project (PUI). Medellin, Colombia*. Urban Development Agency, p. 7-9.

¹¹⁴ Blanco, C. & Kobayashi, H. (2009). *Urban transformation in slum districts through public space generation and cable transportation at northeastern area: Medellin, Colombia*. *The Journal Of International Social Research*, 2(8), 76-90.

*juegos, y conformar espacio público, bajo su sombra, un terreno fino y largo y un montón de ideas, que niños y jóvenes gritaron, en dibujos y maquetas y se plasmaron en un proyecto la plaza de nuestros sueños.*¹¹⁵ ("La Plaza de Nuestros Sueños / Lukas Fúster", 2017)

The public space that was created within the project "La plaza de nuestros sueños" (The square of our dreams) is for the enjoyment of outdoor life, for the game of children and for the encounter between neighbours. The initiative was carried out by the Remansito Community Development Centre (Centro de Desarrollo Comunitario Remansito) with the support of Global Childhood (Global Infancia) and the Canadian Christian Fund for Children (CCFC - Fondo Cristiano Canadiense para la Niñez). This important new green space had the purpose to improve the life and the quality of the daily life of the citizens. It was designed by and for children: the community and the authorities of Paraguay participated in the project. The entire project was developed at a reduced cost because the companies present in the area donated all the recycled materials used.¹¹⁶



38. La Plaza de Nuestros Sueños.

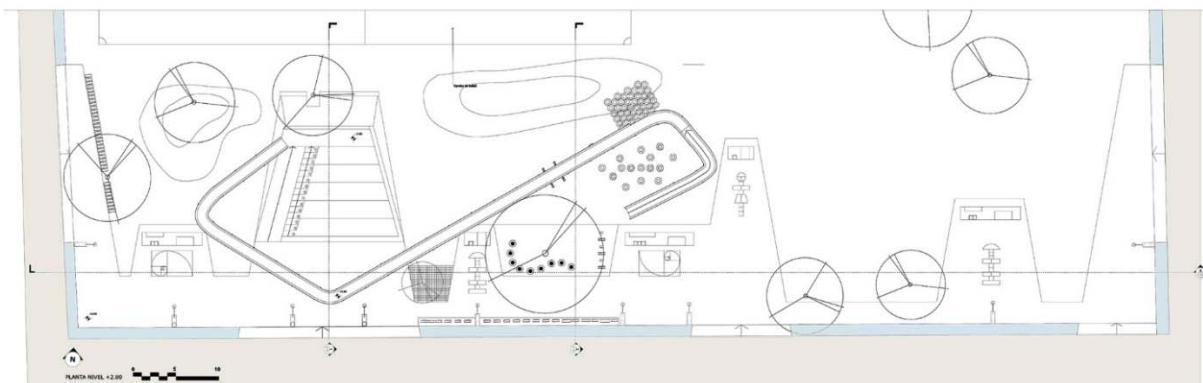
¹¹⁵ *A fine and long terrain, one third of the square, in the remaining two thirds, a public and a "private" court coexist, both for sports, two springs and a hammock structure, without hammock, are the only infrastructure for children, several painted tires make a barrier so that the motorcycles do not enter, support all possible play, the water runs the perimeters of the square almost all year, ceramic industries in the area provide ceramic debris to the population that are transformed into a large sidewalk, in the third that is for us, there are several native trees, waiting for the embrace of 1500 tires in a structure of 80 meters, which it curves to self-support, to hang games, and to create the public space, under its shade, a terrain thin and long and a lot of ideas, which children and young people shouted, in drawings and models and were shaped in a project the square of our dreams.*

¹¹⁶ *La Plaza de Nuestros Sueños - PDF.* (2017). Docplayer.es. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from www.docplayer.es

This is a community project that took place in the property that was donated by the Municipality of Villa Hayes in the Plaza Amistad of the city of Remansito. The construction process was totally participatory and the community was involved in the design, in the preparation of the space and in the fabrication of the games with recycled materials.

For the design of the space, a series of workshops were organized, where adults, children and teenagers were involved. To all of them it was asked to reflect on the right to play, on the importance of the public space and to think about what would be the ideal place for each of them. Later, they had to create their version of the space through drawings, models, paintings or other artistic expressions. The construction of the square and the elements that compose the different areas was also a participatory work: the neighbours organized themselves in groups and, helped by the architect, they learned many techniques to transform different recycled elements in hammocks, chairs and tables.

The square has a gazebo, different types of hammocks for all ages, climbing net, tables where to sit and drink *tereré* (typical Paraguayan drink) and many more games. Remansito now has a new space that is a model for the community management.¹¹⁷



39. La Plaza de Nuestros Sueños, ground floor plan of the project.

5.1.4 VERTICAL GYM, ALFREDO BRILLEMBOURG, 2004. VENEZUELA, CARACAS

The Vertical Gym is a prototype of 1.000 square meter vertical gymnasium, with 4 levels of stacked sports fields. On the first level, there is the mat for the kids to do judo and to dance, on the second level

¹¹⁷ *La Plaza de Nuestros Sueños* / Lukas Fúster. (2017). *Plataforma Arquitectura*. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from www.plataformaarquitectura.cl

there is the big open multiple court for basketball and volleyball, on the third level there is the running track, and then there is a weightlifting room on the top. So, 1.000 meters are turned into 4.000 meters of usable places for sports. A ramp provides access at every level, eliminating the expense of an elevator. The construction of the buildings includes recycled materials, wind towers, solar panels, and rainwater collection to reduce environmental impact and operational costs.¹¹⁸



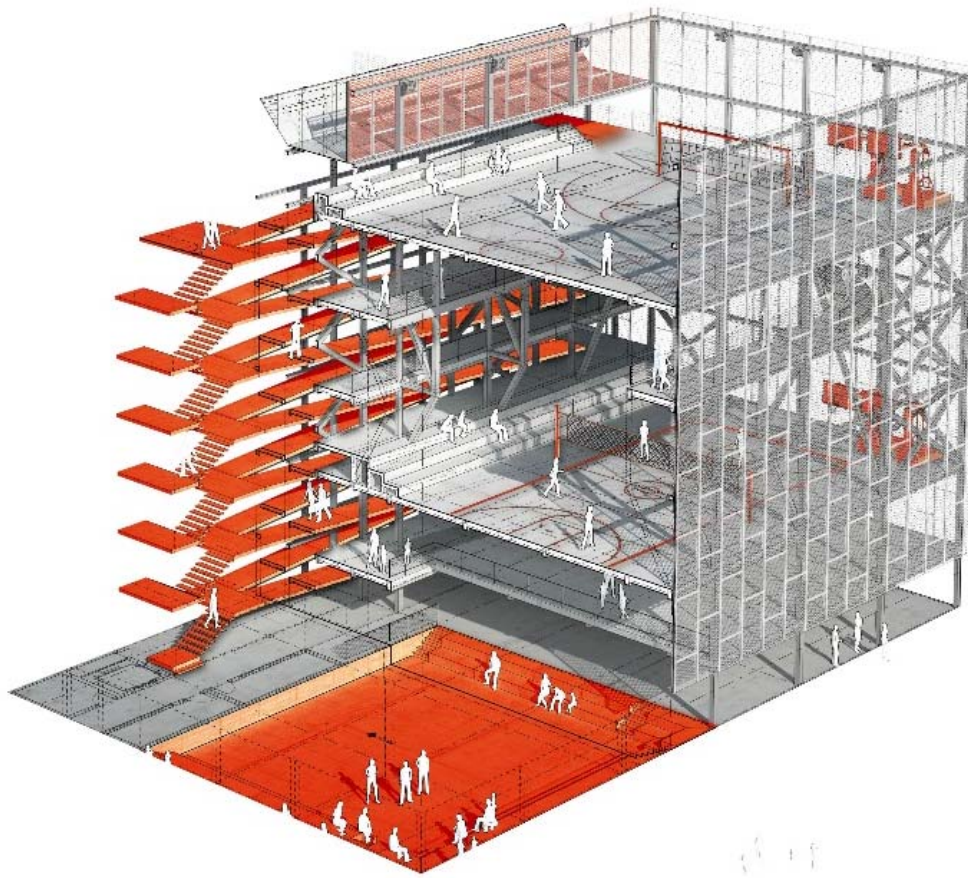
40. Vertical gym building in Venezuela.

The 60% of Caracas' population lives in slums, so the idea of the project was to create vertical gyms, with sports programme, to give to these poor areas, that have no sports infrastructures, the facilities that any formal city has.

Each one of these gyms gets adapted and localized by the local community; that also help to build them. The overall building system is a kit of parts, prefabricated and with bolted steel: everything comes in site and in 4 months it can be assembled. The idea beyond this construction is a type of urban building block, which can then be adapted to fit different situations.

¹¹⁸ *Vertical Gym (Gimnasio Vertical) - Design Other 90% Network | Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. (2017). Design Other 90% Network | Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from www.designother90.org*

The architecture posits a solution to the problem of spatial scarcity and the need for conscious programming: it inserts the beneficial programming of public outdoor recreational areas in the low-income urban areas of the cities in Venezuela; limited land and high crime rates in the dense informal settlements and slums of Caracas made them unsafe for children to play and participate in sports. The building is flexible enough to fit within existing structures while remaining a distinct mark on the urban fabric with polychrome and translucent panelling. This structure is easily replicable; it is an ideal model for other impoverished areas lacking the sports and community facilities program.¹¹⁹



41. Vertical Gym San Agustin, Gimnasio Vertical.

Sports grounds are usually the only remaining street-level spaces in cities left unbuilt or structure-free, but these spaces are often too small and insufficient. So, the only direction in which sports facilities can be extended is vertically, and this is the key concept of the vertical gymnasium: a sports complex

¹¹⁹ *urban think tank's vertical gym in Venezuela revitalizes region.* (2017). *designboom | architecture & design magazine*. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from www.designboom.com

comprised of basketball courts, weightlifting areas, a running track, a football pitch on the roof, a climbing wall and a few relevant athletic facilities. The project is based on a feasibility study that would closely link the neighbourhood of the poorest part of the city to form a more cohesive city-wide network. On the ground floor, different spatial programs can be planned, based on standardized plans depending on the different needs of the neighbours: shops for local vendors, swimming pool and aquatic sports centre, educational facilities, market, library, metro station.



42. The Vertical Gym Prototype

The first model built in Santa Cruz is active day and night and is used on average by 15.000 visitors each month. Since its opening, the crime rate in the area has decreased by 30%: activities such as football leagues spread the concepts of fair play and tolerance.¹²⁰

Vertical Gym project is changing the way people think about sports areas in dense and low-income neighbourhoods in other parts of the world. Financial investment alone cannot eliminate problems, while certain kinds of design can change the consciousness of people. Design tactics that eliminate problems are done by people and with people. They can respond to their needs and requirements; therefore,

¹²⁰ Alfredo Brillembourg-Mas context. (2017). *Mascontext.com*. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from www.mascontext.com

communities welcome them and they become a point of reference and part of their common identity. The challenge is to introduce together with environmental engineers a best practices example that will use the identity of the *gimnasio vertical* as a sport complex. Sustainable technologies are promoted as part of the design to make the prototype a responsive object.¹²¹ In fact, the use of a vertical gym system is invented, designed and constructed in order to guarantee that the spaces of a building of sporting vocation are occupied by people, and for that reason giving an image of dynamism of the usable spaces.

¹²¹ *urban matters » Projects » Vertical Gymnasium*. (2017). *Urban-matters.org*. Retrieved 2 March 2017, from www.urban-matters.org

6

PARTICIPATE

Participate: to take part in or become involved in an activity. Share with others a condition.

This chapter stands as the conclusion of a work of analysis: historical, starting from the *conventillo* and *villa miseria*; cognitive, presenting the data demonstrating the development of Villa 31; and demonstrative, proposing examples in some South American cities. Exposing today's situation in Villa 31, chosen as a case study, it will be outlined the projects elaborated to the urbanization of the *villa*, exposing the general situation, and how each program behaves in relation to the expected overall achievements, and their activities and initiatives carried out or in process.

6.1 EXISTING URBAN DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR VILLA 31

As Villa 31 is an informal neighbourhood in the city of Buenos Aires, a lot of discussions are being held about it, and several proposals have been put forward to urbanize it and regulate it.

In the following chapters, will be presented the three main projects developed around Villa 31: “Treinta y Todos” promoted by the Government of Buenos Aires and now in action; the preliminary urban project “Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica” by the Architect Javier Fernandez Castro, that represents the beginning of the process of urbanization of the slum; and the proposal of the Architect Jorge Mario Jauregui “Villa 31 Socio-Spatial Structuring Project”.

As was mentioned previously, the *villas* arose because of the social exclusion of individuals or families, that were unable to enter the formal system, to be part of the formal market with sufficient income to live in an acceptable housing and cover their basic expenses. *Emergency villas* were considered in their beginnings as transitory settlements; however, they began to reproduce more and more during time,

becoming permanent housing areas. Nowadays in these neighbourhoods there is a system of non-legal property, informal real estate markets, and informal clothing and food markets. Moreover, the condition of informality of these settlements serves as a refuge for different types of illegal activities such as drug sales and consumption. However, it should be noted that not everyone living in these *villas* participates in such activities: many of the inhabitants have formal jobs, go to school and seek reintegration into society.¹²²

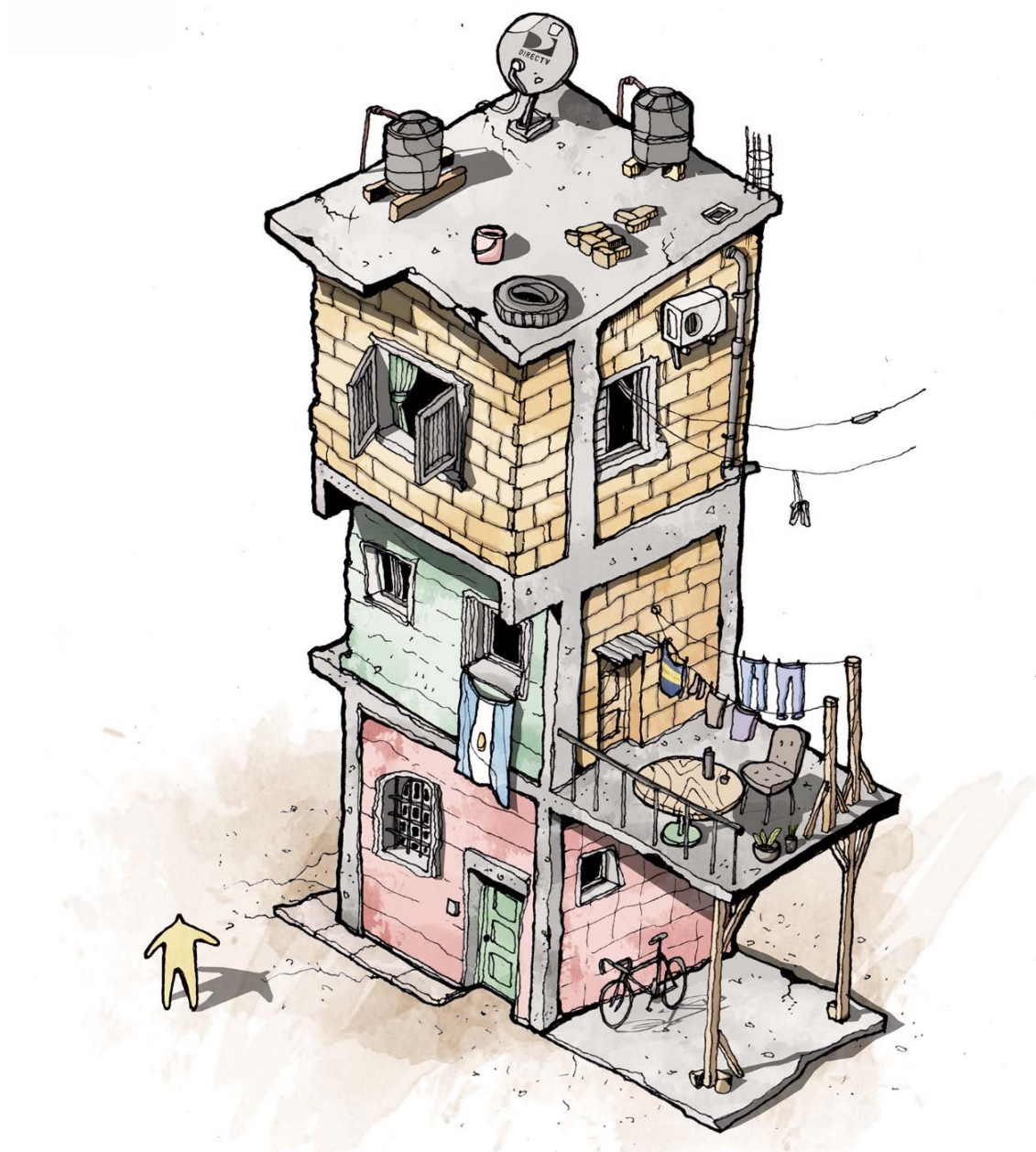
Property is the classic instrument of institutionalization: the availability of a legal title of property is the most common way to formality and it should be a goal to be achieved for every family or group of people living in a slum. This would restore economic incentives and give to these individuals a reason to invest in their futures. For this it is necessary the existence of a cadastre that allows the identification of each property in a public registry; an urban planning that allows the access of authorities that guarantee the legal and institutional security of the properties; and the title deed as value for a guarantee for obtaining a credit or for a value reserve. It must be considered that in the *villas* there is already an informal real estate market, which becomes an obstacle to the development of a formal real estate market.¹²³

Even though there are some existing projects that concern Villa 31, and some of them are already in place, there is a lack of information on the urbanization project for the neighbours, what are they about and how do they work: the inhabitants of the *villa* are not informed about the urban and architectural works that are being undertaken at their own home.

The central point of all the reforms on Villa 31 is, in fact, the property: at the end of the renovation works carried out by the government, the residents are supposed to pay for the land on which their home is located. But how do they calculate this value? Depending on the geographical location of the neighbourhood in the city, or on the quality of the houses and the living conditions in Villa 31? This is still an unclear question regarding these projects. Indeed, many neighbours do not leave their houses during the renovations works because they are afraid of losing them. Fearful of some government irregularities, they think that the urbanization project of the *villa* is a strategy to hunt people out there, to make them pay more taxes until they are reduced to misery and forced to leave even that part of the city.

¹²² Solanet, M., Gottelli, C., & Leclercq, N. *Villas de emergencia en Buenos Aires. Análisis de propuestas*. Libertad Y Progreso. p. 3.

¹²³ Solanet, M., Gottelli, C., & Leclercq, N. *Villas de emergencia en Buenos Aires. Análisis de propuestas*. Libertad Y Progreso. p. 7-8.



43. Sketch of a fragment of Villa 31.

6.1.1 "TREINTA Y TODOS" URBANIZATION VILLA 31, GOVERNMENT OF BUENOS AIRES

The project "Treinta y Todos" (Thirty and Everybody) developed by the Government of the City in 2016 tries to integrate, to improve the living conditions and to provide services to the inhabitants of Villa 31, maintaining the characteristics of what people have built there along many years. At the beginning of 2017 the works started and now they are at an intense pace and well underway. The workmen are already working to connect the neighbourhood to the sewerage network, to guarantee the drinking water and to

organize the electricity and telephone lines. The incentive for all these works comes in part from what has been said by the neighbours: they want to be able to pay for services because that legitimates them as users and removes them from the informality and discrimination status.

The initial project of urbanization of Villa 31 and Villa 31 Bis was elaborated by Javier Fernandez Castro in 2002. In 2011 it became law, but the plan never came to fruition. "There is a lack of political decision and assumption of the *villas* as a reality. They are neighbourhoods, they are there, in front of our noses" said Fernandez Castro.

The project has many objectives: to build a linear park on the Illia highway, to integrate the Thays Park and to make a green space in the place that today is called the "containera", a gigantic deposit of containers that borders the port area. But the biggest challenge is the strategy for achieving higher levels of education: of every 100 people, who live in the Villa, 69 have not finished the secondary school; for those people, the project aims to provide an adult training centre.

An even more ambitious project is to transfer the Ministry of Education into the neighbourhood by 2018. It has been opened an architecture competition at FADU (Faculty of Architecture, Design and Urbanism of the University of Buenos Aires) for the architectural projects for that new building. Placing the National Ministry in the heart of the Villa 31 not only would mean the daily entry of 2.000 people to work in the area but also would have a strong symbolic weight. Ultimately it would mean promoting the integration of the *villa* through knowledge and education, those immaterial goods that today are inaccessible for many people, but that would give several new opportunities for the whole community. The works are supposed to culminate at the end of 2019.¹²⁴

The plan also proposes the acquisition of a property adjacent to the existing settlement that currently belongs to YPF, valued at \$ 9 million. There will take place the new ministerial building that will be called "Maria Elena Walsh" which will integrate an educational centre with an initial level school, a primary, a secondary and an adult school, and about 1.500 new homes that are planned to be moved from the sector that is located now below the highway Illia (Bajo Autopista); these new housing would not exceed four floors of height. Another intervention related to the highway will be the modification of its route, in the section that goes above the *villa*, with a detour of the current route to the Libertador avenue; the space that will be emptied will be transformed into a park in height that it will extends for more than four hectares, it would be like the High Line of New York.

¹²⁴ Gutiérrez, M. (2017). *"De la villa al barrio: Proyecto Treinta y Todos"*. Monica Gutierrez. Available at www.monicagutierrez.com.ar

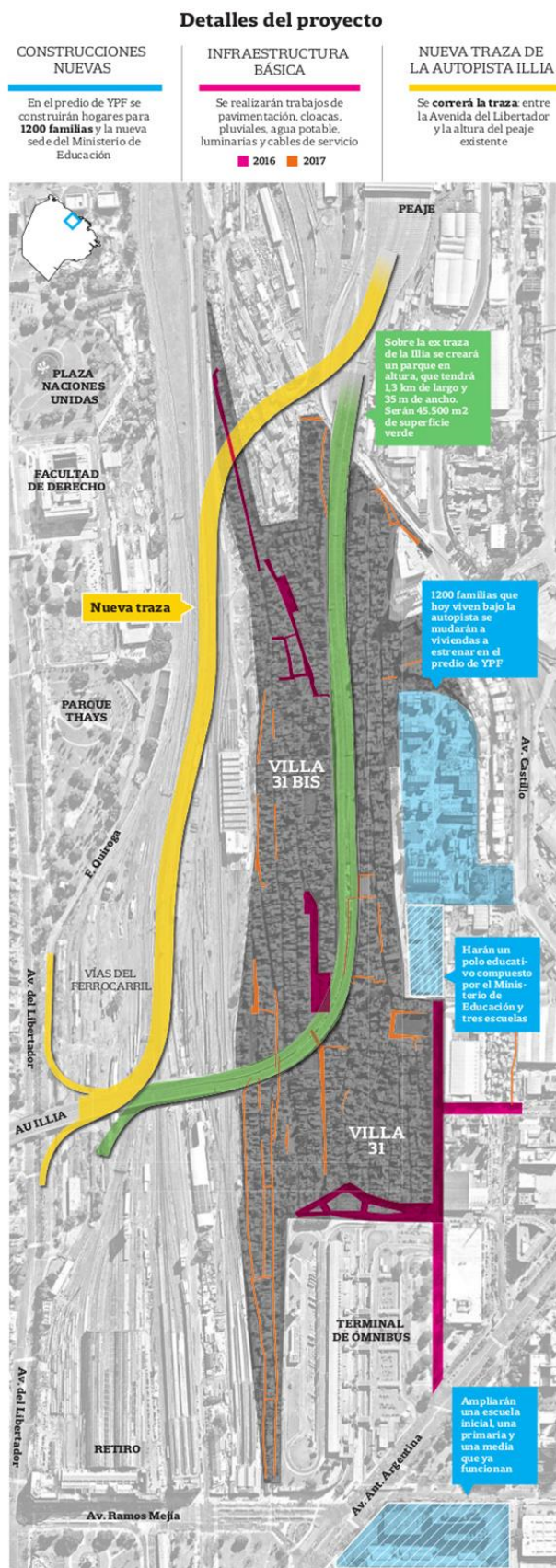
Also, a three-year basic infrastructure plan was stipulated to guarantee to the residents the installation of pavements, sewers, rainwater collection, drinking water supply, luminaires and service cables, as well as the reconstruction of the Health Centre 23 and the creation of a new one, and the renovation of 26 public spaces into squares and courts. Finally, it will seek the formalization of about 900 commercial spaces that now are established in an informal way.¹²⁵ To encourage the employment, there will be built a Centre for Labour Development, which will carry out the corresponding procedures so that those who have street or local stalls at the trade fair in the *villa*, will be able to formalize their work. "Our idea is to begin a process of integration of the neighbourhood 31 and for that initiate a joint work in dialogue with the neighbours," said Rodríguez Larreta (argentine politician) in statements to the press. (Azerrat, 2016)

Most of the necessary budget will come from the sale of a plot of land in Tiro Federal, in Núñez. The rest will be financed by international loans that are being negotiated by the city government. The sum includes the \$ 9.000.000 needed to acquire the eight hectares of the YPF campus where the Ministry of Education and the new housing modules will be built. For these works, the neighbours will not have to pay anything.

The World Health Organization recommends between 10 and 15 square meters of green space per person, while in Villa 31 and 31 Bis right now there are only 0,3 square meters per inhabitant. The ecological corridor to be installed on the highway will have 45.500 square meters, which would increase that proportion to 7,5 square meters per neighbour. At the northern part of the *villa* the access to the future linear park will be at the level of the housing, while to reach the park from the other part of the neighbourhood stairs or other means of entry will be installed.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Azerrat, V. (2016). *El gobierno porteño anunció un plan para la urbanización de las villas 31 y 31 bis*. Available at www.telam.com.ar

¹²⁶ NACION, L., Aires, B., & 31, V. (2016). *Prometen que en 2019 la villa 31 será un barrio y los vecinos, propietarios*. *Lanacion.com.ar*. Available at www.lanacion.com.ar



44. Masterplan Treinta y Todos project.



45. The Linear Park of Villa 31.

To sum up, the project seeks to integrate the settlement area in the rest of the City considering three main axes: education, health and work. The objective of the initiative is to unite this territory with the City of Buenos Aires; more specifically, streets will be paved, façades and structures of existing homes will be improved, luminaires will be installed and better provision will be made in public services, through a brand-new electricity system. The entire project is being supervised by Diego Fernández, secretary of Urban and Social Integration.

The urbanization of the Villa is a complex project that needs the joint work of the neighbours, the coordination of many professionals, and the support of different areas of the national and city governments. For that reason, it will take part the representatives of three ministries and three

commissions of the legislature of the City, of the Defensoría del Pueblo, of officials of the Nation, and of the team of the University of Buenos Aires.¹²⁷

6.1.2 PRELIMINARY URBAN PROJECT BARRIO 31 CARLOS MÚGICA, ARCH. JAVIER FERNANDEZ CASTRO

A team of research and the FADU students, explored each section of the *villa*, its streets and corridors, recognizing its focal points and flow lines, its references and fabric patterns, from the consolidated density areas to the precarious housing of newcomers. The development of these readings allowed to interpret the structure of the site. The meeting of the potentialities and conditioners of the pre-existences was the necessary and decisive step to propose a new structure, a proposal for the resignification of space. The project doesn't want to replace the existing houses, but aims to transform them by reclassifying the old constructions that already exist. The proposal resulted from a collective construction, where the professionals act after listening and interpreting the demands of the neighbours of the neighbourhood.

The project solves three intervention scales:

- at the macro scale, the resolution of the relationship of the neighbourhood with its immediate environment, incorporating its structure in an operation articulated with the airport Jorge Newbery and the port, while presenting sustainable alternatives for the area;
- at the medium scale, the resolution of the relationship between the neighbourhood and its immediate surroundings, based on various pieces of articulation capable of establishing relationships with existing infrastructures in the environment, guaranteeing shared public spaces and clear accessibility situations;
- at the micro scale, the resolution of the internal structure of the neighbourhood, starting from associating in a coherent system all its parts, in operations of qualification of the pre-existence, incorporating new programs and extending the basic infrastructures.

In the last session of 2009 of the legislature of Buenos Aires, it was approved the law 3343 of urbanization of Villa 31 and 31 Bis. The law defined the constitution of a multi-sectorial and participatory table for the preparation of the final draft, provided by the representation of the National

¹²⁷ Boletín informativo intervención villas 31 y 31bis. (2010). *B31 Barrio Treinta Y Uno Carlos Múgica*, 1.

State and the City, the neighbours and the research team as technical support, and it prohibits compulsory evictions.¹²⁸

TABLA DE SUPERFICIES B31

PROYECTO URBANIZACIÓN	unidades	superficie	p. unitario	p. total	%
→ compra tierras YPF	92.000 m ²		\$ 500	\$ 46.000.000	5,13
→ demolición (apertura calles)	1.100 u	43.360 m ²	\$ 1.500	\$ 1.650.000	0,18
→ vivienda nueva en altura	723 u	31.295 m ²	\$ 2.600	\$ 112.736.000	12,57
→ vivienda en pb	330 u		\$ 3.420	\$ 107.028.900	11,93
→ vivienda existente consolidada*	6.372 u		\$ 56.000	\$ 356.842.667	39,77
→ parques	125.430 m ²		\$ 120	\$ 15.051.600	1,68
→ equipamientos nuevos	30.700 m ²		\$ 2.500	\$ 77.585.200	8,65
→ equipamientos existentes	5.000 m ²		\$ 1700	\$ 8.500.000	0,95
→ calles	97.600 m ²		\$ 165	\$ 16.104.000	1,79
→ pasajes	7.630 m ²		\$ 165	\$ 1.258.950	0,14
→ infraestructura pública	7.425 m ²		\$ 20.800	\$ 154.440.000	17,21
total				\$ 897.197.317	

PROYECTO ERRADICACIÓN	unidades	superficie	p. unitario	p. total	%
→ compra tierras	786.110 m ²		\$ 0	\$ 0	0,00
→ demolición total	7.425 u		\$ 1.500	\$ 11.137.500	0,56
→ vivienda nueva	7.425 u		\$ 3.300	\$ 1.715.175.000	85,62
→ parques	125.430 m ²		\$ 120	\$ 15.051.600	0,75
→ equipamiento nuevo	35.700 m ²		\$ 2.500	\$ 90.085.200	4,50
→ calles	97.600 m ²		\$ 165	\$ 16.104.000	0,80
→ pasajes	7.630 m ²		\$ 165	\$ 1.258.950	0,06
→ infraestructura pública	7.425 m ²		\$ 20.800	\$ 154.440.000	7,71
→ + costo social					
total				\$ 2.003.252.250	

*infraestructura privada + mejoramiento general

** los valores fueron tomados de los promedios publicados en el Clarín Arquitectura y de Programas de Vivienda estatales

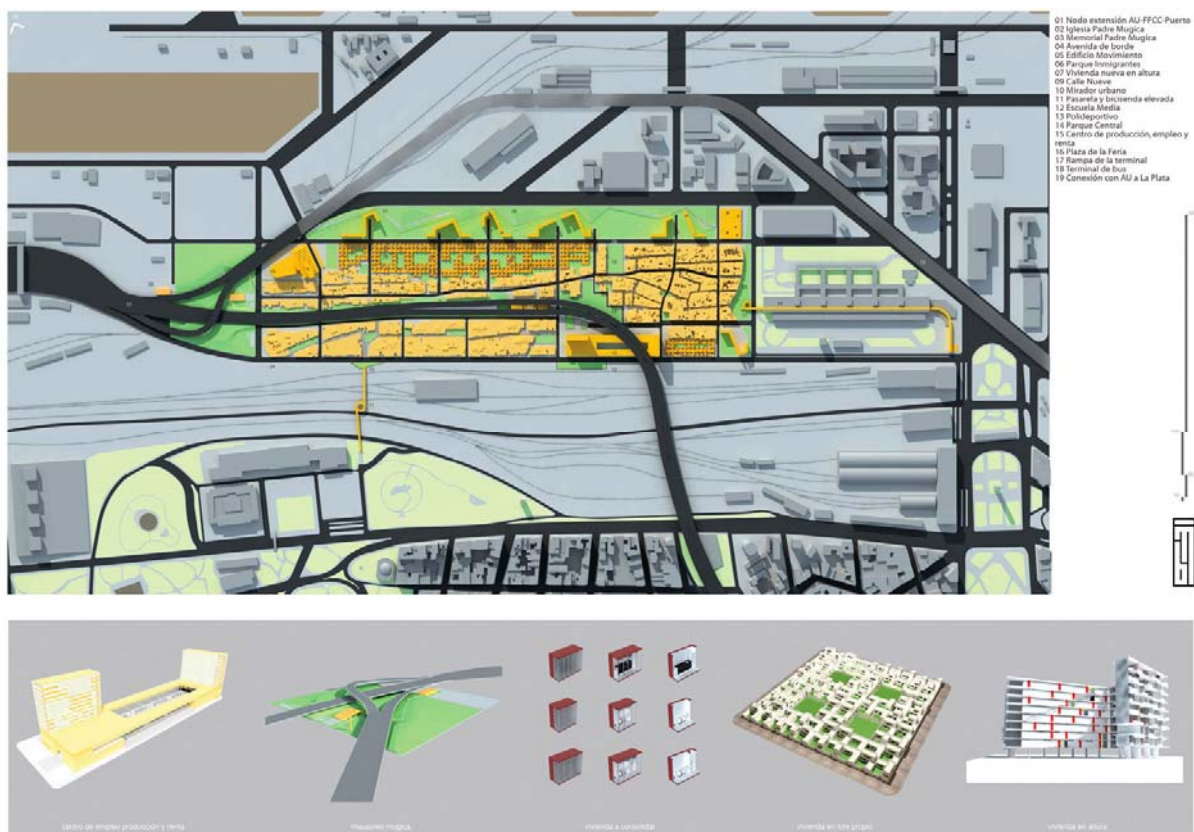
46. Comparison table between urbanization and eradication costs.

The project raises a series of hypotheses and intends to discuss with all the actors involved their formalizations, in a constant exercise of increasing specification, aimed at guaranteeing the future development of a feasible and sustainable executive project. The project must contemplate at the same

¹²⁸ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 134-135.

time the relationship between Villa 31 and the city, the existence of a neighbourhood that for more than fifty years has not been considered. This project is proposed as a tool: ideas and drawings on which to start discussing, an alternative to be evaluate.¹²⁹

The work on the existing centralities recognizes the square of the market as the façade of the neighbourhood towards the bus terminal. The project of this space contemplates the design of a continuous floor with ramps that organize the space for the platform of the market, for the stop of the public transport and for the new access to the bus terminal. This would be the set of an important trade market where the offer of all kinds of products and services together with some temporary equipment provided by social programs, would give an important value to the place.¹³⁰



47. Masterplan Barrio 31.

¹²⁹ Fernández Castro, J. Anteproyecto urbano Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. *Revista Iberoamericana De Urbanismo*, 1(3).

¹³⁰ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 160.

The central square, generated by the break in of the highway in its height curve, presents the potential of transforming this area into a large public space in which the mentioned centre for generation of employment and income, as well as other possible social, educational and sport facilities could take place. In this Central Park, with the presence of the motorway the construction of new homes would be forbidden and the only suitable uses would be those of public spaces and social services.¹³¹

A large border park, offered to the neighbourhood and to the whole city, that now marks the definitive delimitation of the urban fabric over the port, will allow to contain social facilities and new housing, mediating the presence of port facilities and the future connection with the highway that will go to the city of La Plata, in the south of Buenos Aires.

In the northwest end of the area, the original church with a restored environment, together with the implementation of the memorial of Father Múgica, will be the new centre of pilgrimage and homage. *El Barrio*, as already mentioned in other sections, has an indisputable historical reference in the figure of Father Carlos Múgica. The proposal of a topographic park that at the same time resolves its pedestrian accessibility without interference and continuity, while overlapping the rail crossing and leaving the airspace for the motorway, allows to think about an integrated project. The Memorial Múgica adds to the religious spirit the commemoration of the struggle for social inclusion.¹³²

The opening of new secondary streets guarantees the increasing of connectivity. The project contemplates a series of main streets flow that articulate with the immediate surroundings. The necessary penetration of public transport has required identifying a series of structuring streets. The pre-existing roads will be wider to ensure a continuity within the neighbourhood, and they will be complemented with others and new openings. This solution will guarantee a basic mesh when developing the North-South axis, covering uniformly the current territory of the *villa*. These roads define the basic dimension of public space, through basic multipurpose flooring, the provision of luminaires, furniture, signage and edge forestation, contributing to the change of the general image.¹³³

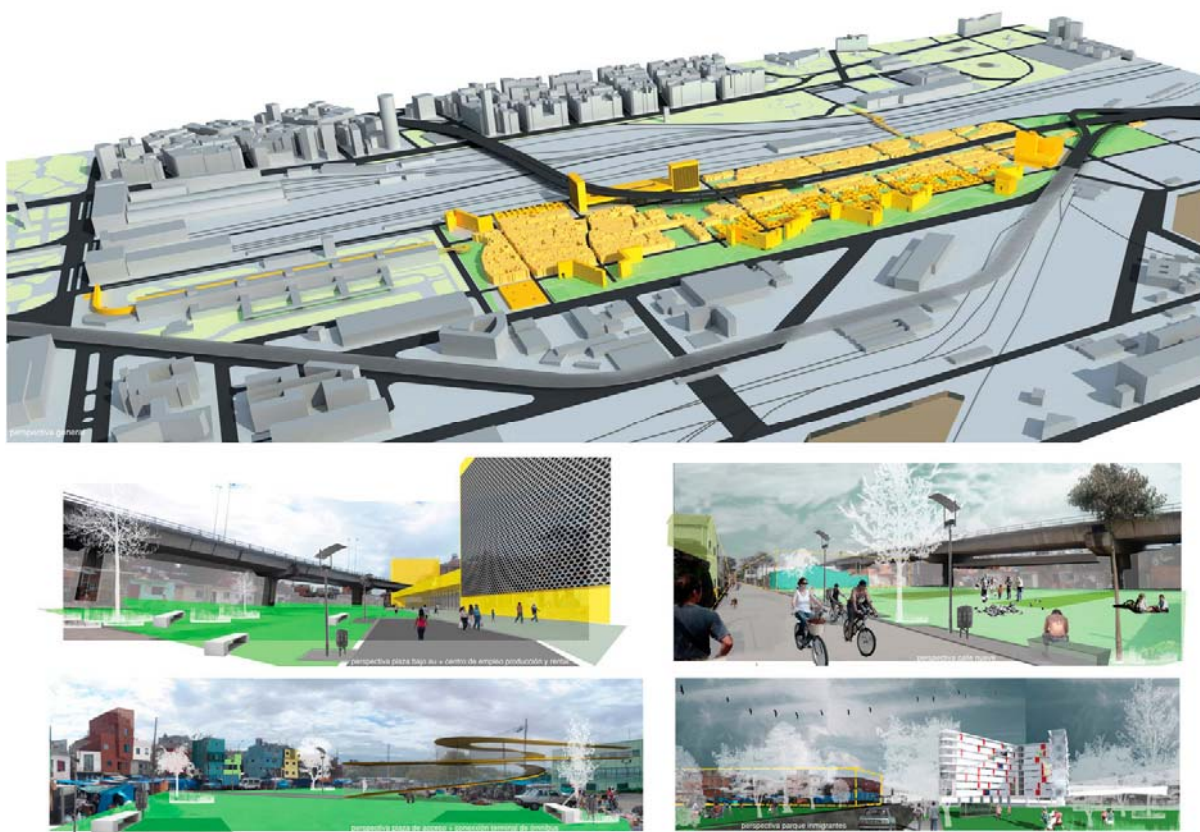
The spaces of reference are completed with the improvement of pre-existing public spaces. The neighbourhood's own history of configuration has shaped various modalities and gradations of public

¹³¹ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 162.

¹³² Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 158.

¹³³ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 152.

spaces, ranging from the open ones with differentiated corners, squares and courts preserved from the densification of the fabric, to neighbourhood institutions which include social facilities, especially neighbourhood dining rooms and libraries, first aid rooms, community centres, sports clubs and churches.¹³⁴



48. Rendering project Barrio 31.

6.1.3 VILLA 31 SOCIO-SPATIAL STRUCTURING PROJECT, ARCH. JORGE MARIO JAUREGUI

The study for the Socio-Spatial Structuring Project of Villa 31 was carried out by the architect Jauregui and his multidisciplinary team, with the collaboration of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Buenos Aires.

The proposal was to relocate the sector 31 Bis in the YPF field, including a direct connection between the proposal of a service market and the bus terminal station, incorporating a large esplanade for the

¹³⁴ Fernández Castro, J. (2010). *Barrio 31 Carlos Múgica. Posibilidades y límites del proyecto urbano en contextos de pobreza* (1st ed.). Buenos Aires: Instituto de la Espacialidad Humana, p. 168.

access and a sports area to be implanted in the place where it is currently located Villa 31 Bis. The study aimed at the general urbanization of Villa 31 with the incorporation of services and public spaces, urban equipment, infrastructure, access treatment, paving of streets, squares and residual spaces, and complementing the existing road layout through new connections, general landscape-environmental treatment of the area along the highway, new freeway connection to the port, general reforestation of the area, public lighting, street furniture and signage. All this would have been included in the budget of \$ 3.500 per family.

The new great centrality to be introduced by the project consisted of an interface between Villa 31, the highway and the railway grounds, materialized by the implementation of three interconnected programs: a Centre for Generation of Labour and Income to be implanted in abandoned sheds; a great Esplanade-Civic Square functioning as a meeting space and an area for cultural and recreational manifestations; and a Sports Centre including indoor gym, soccer field and sports pools. In this way, work, recreation and sport will constitute a new structuring nucleus of the social life of the community, also relevant for all neighbouring areas.

It is necessary to consider in the elaboration of projects of urban and social structuring of popular areas, that there are two negative visions rooted that must be fought. On the one hand, an economist, reductionist and preconceptual view, according to which every inhabitant of a *villa* is a potential criminal; and on the other hand, the absence, the things that *villa* would not have access to the basic services, asphalt, schools, health post, nurseries, rules, laws, or citizenship, which would justify the formulation of limited public interventions and without consistency. In this way, the formulation of a project must include the richness of the daily practices of its inhabitants in an integrating way, with an overall vision and considering time perspectives that simultaneously include the short, medium and long term.

*“The main points of the urban restructuring are the general urbanization of Villa 31, the construction of housing units for relocation of Villa 31 Bis and to deal with the problems of overcrowding, the construction of nurseries and health post, the urbanization of squares, streets, parks, waste areas and the sector under the motorway, the incorporation of vegetation in all streets, squares and public areas.”*¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Jauregui, J. Jorge Mario Jáuregui. Available at www.jauregui.arq.br



49. Sketch of Villa 31 Socio-Spatial Structuring Project

In contrast with other cases where the project is requested by the public authorities, for Villa 31, Jorge Mario Jauregui developed, in dialogue with the neighbours and with the support of Favela-Bairro project team, a macro intervention study that established the basic guidelines for a sustainable action articulating the general interest of the city: the creation of conditions for the generation of work and income through the urbanization project, the resettlement of the sector called 31 Bis on nearby land, for the creation of a sports and recreation centre, the urban reconfiguration of the edges and internal areas of Villa 31, and the incorporation of high quality public facilities and services of metropolitan size.

The centre for generation of work and income is one of the most important urban-social pieces of any socio-spatial structuring project, as it functions as the connection between the interest of the city and the creation of sources of work, in an organized way, for the inhabitants of the place. These labour services are of the most varied kind, covering the activities of electronics, clothing, household utensils, furniture, bicycles and all kinds of appliances. This urban piece should be as powerful and visible as possible. It should constitute a frame of reference in the local area and its surroundings. Besides, by including places such as the pharmacy and the "convenience trade" that must operate 24 hours a day, it will also contribute to guarantee the surveillance of the place. This would be the kind of public equipment with which everyone wins: the residents, because they find a socially useful form of inclusion in the formality, and the city because it facilitates access to those services normally dispersed and difficult to locate. These centres for work are symbols of a new condition of conviviality, endowed with high quality of design, according to the highest standards of eco-environmental performance, using all the technology for capturing solar energy, reusing rainwater, natural ventilation and promoting a "green architecture",

constituting a new presence of prestige in the local, helping to requalify the entire area and its surroundings.¹³⁶

PLANO DE ESTRUCTURACIÓN SOCIO ESPACIAL



50. Urban and Social Structuring Plan

6.1.4 EXISTING PROPOSALS ASSESSMENT

"The critic should emphasise that it relates to the future and not be satisfied with making categorical judgements or isolated interpretations of the past. The contents of the critique should focus on how things in the past and present can teach us how better to handle the future". (Wayne Attoe, 1978)

The intention of this chapter is to formulate a criticism around Villa 31, which embraces my feelings, my proposals and the presented projects. The purpose is to analyse the relationship between these three elements in order to identify the weaknesses and potentialities of this site, and of the research itself. This chapter is written in the first person to emphasize its personal and empirical dimension. The assessment is made not on the proposals that I suggest but rather on the proposals that are considered at the beginning of this last section of the research. The objective is to highlight the comparison and opposition between these proposals and the principles of approach that I advocate.

¹³⁶ Jáuregui, J. *Villa 31* | Jorge Mario Jáuregui. Available at www.jauregui.arq.br

Criticism is usually carried out retrospectively: it is a posterior subject, connected to your culture and cultural values. In a sense, everyone is a critic: everybody has opinions about what's around us. Criticism is, after all, about seeing, giving opinions and sharing them with the others.

The aspects that I found interesting in the projects of the architects Javier Fernandez Castro and Jorge Mario Jauregui are the propensity to listen and interpret the demands of the inhabitants before drafting the proposal; the will to focus the project on alternatives and sustainable actions taking into account the existing environment by promoting a green architecture; the recognition of the importance of the public spaces, as well as the accessibility to these areas; the upgrading and enhancement of the pre-existences; and finally, the will to include this neighbourhood in the city of Buenos Aires, and the creation of formal employment opportunities within this.

Although in this chapter I would like to focus on the government's plan, as it is the only project that has been approved and is currently underway in Villa 31, the purpose of the ideas and concepts formulated was to express somehow an alternative proposal to this one. The plan "Treinta y todos" is really a very ambitious project, which when it will be accomplished it will be very successful among the public opinion, as it aims at urbanizing a Buenos Aires slum and its integration into the city as a neighbourhood in all its effects. But looking at this project from outside, what emerges is that the government is providing great solutions, but instead of addressing existing problems and trying to formulate proposals around these, it merely offers alternatives that surely propose better and more agile solutions but that do not face the major design challenges.

For example, the idea of creating a new branch of the Illia Highway, where to convey the flow of cars, and transform the existing path, which crosses Villa 31 on a green promenade that echoes the New York High Line Project, it will be surely of great effect; but do the inhabitants of Buenos Aires really need this promenade in this very dense area of the city? and especially, how would the *villa's* relationship with this structure, that would attract many tourists and visitors every day, will change? Or, is it necessary to build a new ministerial building inside the slum to encourage people every day to enter in the neighbourhood? Is this the solution to integrate the *villa* into the rest of the city? Transfer some of the city's functions to force those who work there to enter, it does not seem to me to solve the problem of the integration of this neighbourhood, on the contrary, this solution could lead to the use of such spaces as passage places and not for rest or permanence, it could lead to the generation of a space even more empty in the evening when the area would be free again of its "new" workers.

From my point of view, solutions like these do not favour integration, but rather penalize it, creating an even greater gap between the different social classes that would share the space. The government in its

project recognizes the problem and solves it by avoiding it and focusing the attention on new spaces, but what would be interesting and much more challenging to do would be to use these problems to find a solution that transforms them into benefits for the area.

Another thing that leaves me perplexed, which emerged from the interviews I conducted, is the fact that this proposal has been formulated without the participation of the *villeros*, the direct concerned, without knowing their needs and ideas about it. The inhabitants of Villa 31 don't know when the works will begin, what kind of interventions will be made, and how their *barrio* will change. The residents are afraid that after these renovations, they will be asked to respond to the cost of the work or the value of the land they occupy, being forced to abandon their home. This is what is generated when communication is lacking: confusion and fear. Communication and participation are, from my point of view, the most important part of a design proposal that cannot be skipped, but unfortunately Argentina's policies usually tend to be unidirectional and do not involve the contribution of the stakeholders, and it is precisely this lack of collaboration between the different actors that leads to the implementation of projects of dubious utility and which often raise many criticisms in the public opinion.

"*Words have the power to make the invisible visible*" wrote the French author Antoine de Saint Exupery in his famous philosophical work "The Little Prince".

6.2 LISTENING TO VOICES FROM INSIDE: THE INHABITANTS OF BUENOS AIRES SPEAK

As I am very passionate about photography and cinema, I decided to make a short movie, a documentary about Villa 31 from my point of view, which can be found in attachment to this investigation. This material will serve as well as introduction to the thesis presentation.

When I first arrived in Buenos Aires to write my thesis there, about a topic and a place set in that city, I immediately felt confused about the issue and the dynamics of that environment, that were unknown to me. The course that I attended at the University of Buenos Aires "Hábitat y pobreza urbana en América Latina" (Habitat and urban poverty in Latin America) helped me to understand, interpret, and get involved into the South American reality. As in Europe we don't have any example comparable to the critical slums' situation present in the big cities of Latin America; we are not aware of the urban and social politics that the government proposes and implements and of the development of these poor realities.

Since I don't want my reader to feel lost as I was at the beginning I thought that the simplest way to introduce a topic and to make sure that people will understand it, would be to show pictures, videos, and stories of this reality. This is the purpose of the video attached to this thesis and of the interviews on the following pages.

The documentary "The public space of Buenos Aires through your eyes" is a general overview of the city, its touristic spots and of the different neighbourhoods that make up the city, with its rich and poor realities together. A big part of the video is dedicated to the interviews, that I made to different kind of people, of distinct background, nationality, employment and social class. A greater focus is placed upon the inhabitants of Villa 31, in order to help me to understand which are the needs of the people living there and what is missing in the neighbourhood in terms of public spaces.

At the end of this very brief social analysis what emerged is that the inhabitants of Buenos Aires have completely different opinions and perceptions about the city itself and about Villa 31, some are scared, some are interested in, some are aware about what is happening in the city and some others just rely on the rumours. It was interesting to see how the environment from which we come affects our feelings and thought about a topic.

The people that were interviewed were very helpful and kind, they were interested about the project and they motivated me to keep on studying this topic and keep the faith that there really is a way to improve these spaces. They taught me that you should plan places for people and with the people, always.

I tried to focus the interviews on the topic of public spaces, because I thought that it would be interesting to know different opinions from different points of view regarding this issue, in fact the interviewees were inhabitants of Villa 31 and of other neighbourhoods of Buenos Aires as well. Since the focus of the research is on the improvement of the public spaces of Villa 31, I began to ask people what a public space is for them and what it represents, in this way I could understand what kind of proposals should be formulated according to the needs and desires of the neighbours.

The common idea among all respondents is that a public space is a place to share and where everyone can socialize; a space of recreation, where people can pass the time and kids can play in safety; a place that belongs to everyone and where there is no need for permission to enter. What transpired is that people want and need to share with other people their lives, their moments, their ideas, and to do this they need a place where they can feel safe and comfortable.

As we were talking about a neighbourhood of Buenos Aires, it was interesting to know which are the dynamics of this city and what it represents for its residents. This big city is a place of great opportunities for those who know how to use them; it's welcoming and offers help to the people with its easily apprehensible order. The city has good public spaces, a great cultural offer and green spaces strategically placed. But on the other side, as all the metropolis in the world, and especially in South America, it is a bit insecure, and there is discrimination between the porteños (inhabitants of Buenos Aires) and the foreigners, even though it's a city that raised with the immigrations waves, that have made it so cosmopolitan and with a good mixture.

Regarding the history and the formation of Villa 31, everyone is concerned that it began with the immigration of the Europeans and of the neighbouring countries, that's why many nationalities coexist together there, as well as in Buenos Aires. Some know more about the eradications that it suffered, the fight for resistance and the help and work of Father Carlos Múgica. As far as the present situation is concerned, some are familiar with the urbanization projects that have been implemented in the neighbourhood, others feel excluded and denote a lack of information between the government and the residents. Villa 31, for those who live there, represents home, a space of opportunity and the fight for better housing; for those who live in other neighbourhoods of the city it represents a sector that need help to improve and eradicate violence.

The inhabitants of Villa 31 complain that in their neighbourhood there are few good public spaces, such as squares and green places, social centres for improving security and integration are missing. People want a space where to spend their time sharing with the others, a space for recreation and containment, for a social development with no violence. A place for people, that raises from a voluntary action.

These interviews were conducted because it seemed very important to have a social approach, although quite brief, to the topic. To study something without knowing the human aspect, leads you to a superficial knowledge of the facts. For this reason, it is considered that this part of the interviews and of the subsequent considerations is the central part of this research, both together with the historical and data analysis that complete the whole picture.

However, to really understand the topic of this discussion, in addition to the interviews and the bibliographic study, I have to consider also my opinion about Villa 31, that arises from many activities and days of study that I spent there and that helped me to have a general overview of the neighbourhood. So it seemed important to explain which are my impressions and my thoughts about it, so that the reader can better understand where I want to arrive with this script and its meaning.

I remember that the first time I went inside Villa 31 I found it so different from the *favelas* that I visited in Brazil; first of all this one is flat, as the whole city of Buenos Aires, so the streets seem less tight than they would appear if they were on a slope, and secondly, it looked more orderly and more structured since it's clear the intention to try to maintain the same organizations in *manzanas* (blocks) that characterizes the city, with its reticular urban structure. It immediately reminded me also of the poor neighbourhoods of Istanbul, because of its characteristic iron spiral staircases, all coloured, which serve as an external connection between one apartment and the other; I think this is one of the most characteristic element of the *villa*, because it repeats itself outside of every single house throughout the inhabited area. Another thing that has drawn my attention is the dynamism of the neighbourhood, it looks like a work site that never comes to an end; all the houses seem unfinished because the people continue to build other layers above them. Villa 31 looks like a great open-air construction yard.

As far as the physical sensations are perceived, inside the *villa* is very hot, you can perceive a difference of some degrees more than in the rest of the city; inside there, and because of the absence of a pavement, the sun reflects on the whitish ground, blinding those who walk. Spending some time in Villa 31 on a summer afternoon lets one understand how much the tree-lined streets of the city of Buenos Aires mitigate the city's hot heat, creating shadows and cooler areas where to stop. Not only the sun blinded my eyes, but also the sight of what is happening at the point where the Illia highway crosses the slum. In fact, since the neighbourhood survived to this drastic urban intervention, the inhabitants did not stop to build houses under the highway and on the side of it, creating a situation of fragile equilibrium and of great danger for the tenants that use the highway as their roof or imaginary balcony. The highway's issue shocked me and attracted me at the same time because it looks like a huge infrastructure that fell from the sky and was placed there randomly, without thinking about what was going on there and which were the pre-existences. A clear example of this action promoted by the government, symbolizing the lack of respect for the spaces and inhabitants of Villa 31, came to me when I came across one of the many soccer fields that exist inside of the *villa*, and a huge pillar with a sign advertising for the highway was placed exactly at the centre of it. I don't think that the football field came after the pillar conversely, I believe that this giant item was placed there, because cars need to see advertisement exactly at that point of their road, so once again the formal city's needs were of higher interest than those of the informal city.



51. Pillar with a sign advertising in the middle of a soccer field

Another important thing to mention is the feeling of being in a trap once one is inside Villa 31. For example, on the border with the train station and with the port there is a high wall with barbed wire on the top of it that delimitates the space; this representation of the limit gives a closed and isolation perception that is also reflected on the houses of the people, where every window and door has a railing to avoid strangers to enter. This is the reflection that people are scared to stay in the streets that are narrow and of secondary use, because outside of the house there is nothing to do, and consequently empty streets look dangerous. That's why when one is creating a place that is secure one needs to provide an adequate space where people can actually stay, because the presence of people recalls the presence of others, and so on.

Another thing that calls immediately one's attention is the music that never stops; in every corner, day or night it is possible to hear a continuous sound that accompanies the days of the inhabitants. I found this element quite interesting and very remarkable of the neighbourhood as the spiral stairs, because we are not normally used to hear music all the time when we walk around our cities, and this is a strong element that characterizes the place and that should be maintained.

To conclude, it is also clear that religion plays a very important role inside the neighbourhood. People are very affectionate to the figure of Father Carlos Múgica, and around this symbol rotate many religious

organizations that try to involve especially the young community, in order to give values to the children. Many chapels were built inside Villa 31, every sector has a main one and they represent the only formal structure where people can meet and where some activities are taking place. On 24th of March 2017 I participated at the inauguration of Capilla de Lujan in the sector Cristo Obrero, where I was giving classes of guitar for a group of children together with other volunteers, and I was impressed to see how many people came for the inauguration. The church was full and people were standing also outside, the bishop came for the inauguration and then after it, we organize a party for the neighbours. I have to say that in its simplicity it was a success to see how people enjoyed that moment and how much they were happy to stay together in one of these rare events. I think that this inauguration called the presence of all those people, because usually there is nothing going on in the *villa*, I mean nothing for the community, no events where people can gather together. That's why more common spaces are needed, for people to encounter each other and organize among them several activities.

6.3 URBAN INTERVENTION BUENOS AIRES 31, WORKSHOP RUA

Between November and December 2016 with the team of the workshop *RUA Arte, Intervención y Resistencia Urbana* (Art, Intervention and Urban Resistance) I collaborated in the development of a project for an urban intervention at the entrance of Villa 31, in Buenos Aires.

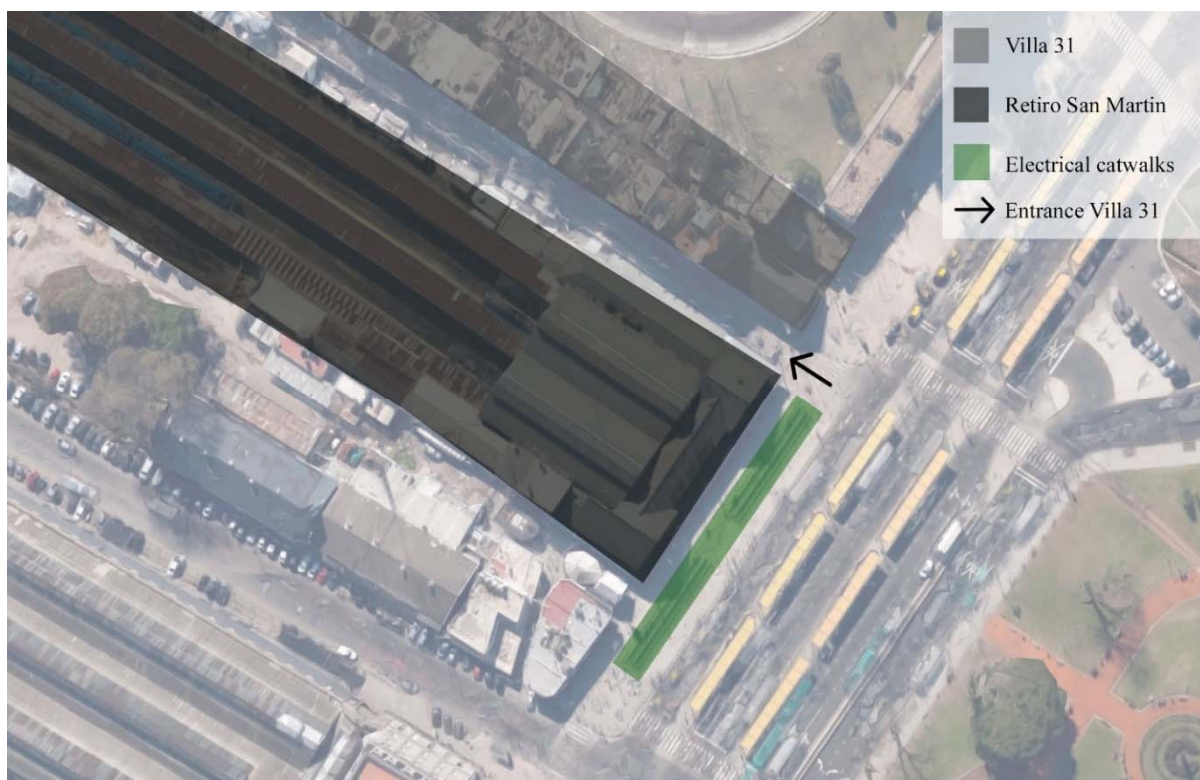


52. Logo workshop RUA

After a visit to the site, the Retiro area, the place chosen for the urban intervention was one of the Villa 31 entrances, where the sidewalk of the Retiro terminals is placed. This place was selected because it represents a point of big pedestrian flows of the city of Buenos Aires, with many people of different profiles circulating, appropriating the existing spaces intensively. It represents a very sharp boundary between the formal and the informal city, and many people passing by do not realize the world that exists behind its limit.

After the decision of selecting this place for the intervention, it was clear the need to work with the limit that exists between the *villa* and the bordering areas of Buenos Aires. It was intended to draw people's attention to think about the existence of this limit and to realize that after that line there is still a part of the city. The exact place of the intervention were the electrical catwalks, that are two huge structures placed in the middle of the sidewalk that don't work anymore; they are abandoned and just act as obstacles for people walking.

The concept behind the intervention was to work with the limit, to create a play area, a connection, to take some of the different forms of appropriation of the *villa* to the sidewalk. The way to call the attention to that limit was bringing to this area an experience of life that we observed inside the *villa*: children playing in the street. Therefore, all around and within the structures of the catwalks, we decided to work with the ludic way of living a public space.



53. Map of the place of intervention



54. Google street view of the place of intervention

We wanted to use the structures of the electrical tapes to create a playful space for children, who already have appropriated the existing structures to play.

The intervention “Buenos Aires 31” took place on December 11th, 2016.

We made signs and posters to bring people's attention to that limit. We prepared easy games in the street using the tapes, the floor and the creativity of the children. We occupied the space with small tables, chairs, some music and food to give to the children.

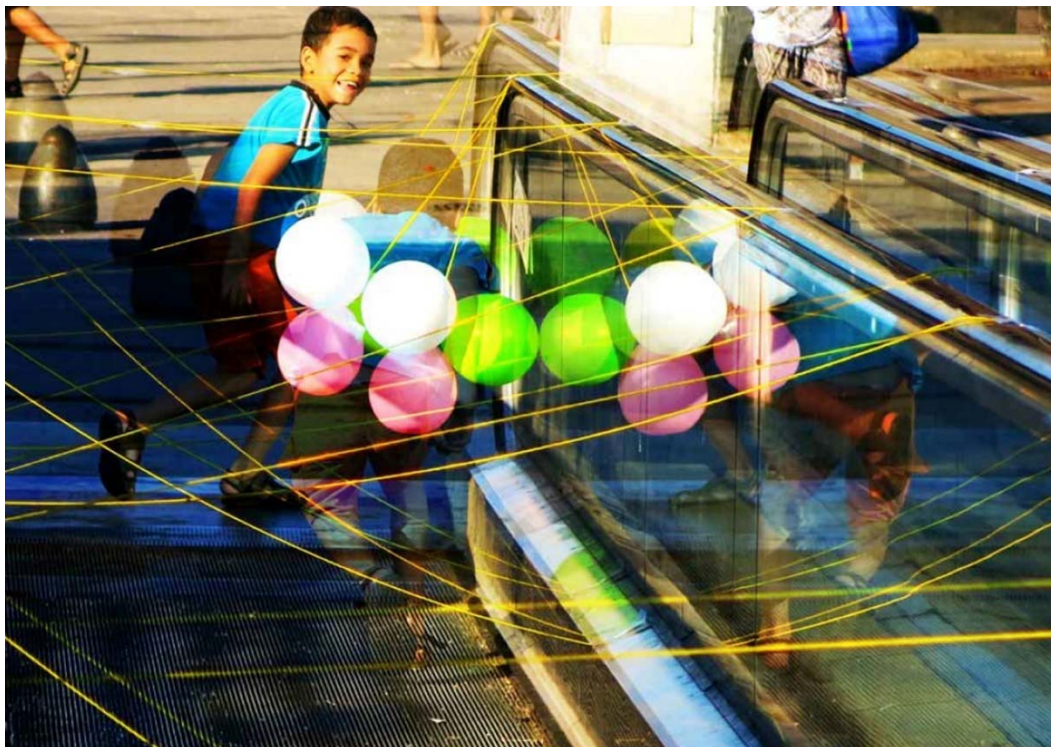
“Lock the limit, slow down with playfulness”.



55. Flyer of urban intervention Buenos Aires 31

The goal of this urban intervention was to gather people together in a specific point of the city: a critical area, where the entrance of Villa 31 meets the three train stations of Retiro and the bus terminal. An area with great pedestrian movement used as a passage to reach other destinations and not as a place to stay. Furthermore, we wanted to break the existing limit between these two distinct realities, we wanted people to be aware of it, and go beyond prejudices and fears.

The combination between the slum and the transport interchange station makes this spot interesting, because from the society point of view those two places are passage areas: in the station, people go to leave for somewhere else, in the poor neighbour people just go to sleep after work. People don't realize that these two areas have a big connection among them, the *villeros* used this big sidewalk that unites the two sectors as their backyard: to sell things, for children to play, to cook food, to hang out. The fact that in this exact point are placed two electrical catwalks, already useless when they were installed and now even more broken, called our attention. The purpose was to show people the potential of this place, and to make them aware of the strong attraction that it has on the neighbours.



56. Urban intervention Buenos Aires 31: kids playing

We wanted our intervention to be easily executable, of great effect and of short duration, because the goal was to show people how much a place can change only by making small variations, and we wanted people to naturally appropriate this space without being forced.

Our intervention was aimed at a young audience. After the site inspection, we noticed the great presence of children with nothing to do and above all without control and safety. We wanted to turn this small space into a playground and a play area, in order to attract the children and their respective families to use it.

The intervention took place in a very spontaneous way: among the participants of the workshop we organized ourselves to bring anything we had at home that would help transform the area into a more colourful place. So, we started cleaning the electrical catwalks and the surrounding area, hiding the damaged and dangerous parts, and we proceed decorating the place, creating labyrinths, bowling slides, soap bubbles, storytelling spaces and race tracks. Once everything was installed, the children started to approach and played, even calling their parents to join this great game area. The urban intervention lasted about 4 hours, between games, music and laughter. We can say it was a success, and the only problem encountered was an initial obstruction from the police that saw the event as an occupation of unauthorized space and could harm the children. But we let them notice that the catwalks, dirty and broken, as they were before the intervention were a far greater danger.

What we learned from this experience is exactly what we were expecting to create: to give people a better space, which they themselves can forge and modify, to make a more secure and appealing area, with the lowest possible cost and maximum success. People need just simplicity, vivacity and fun to appropriate a space, to make it useful and personal.

I find this project interesting to be mentioned at the end of this research, because it represents in its smallness and simplicity the practical work that should be done subsequently to verify the proposals of the thesis. Since in the previous chapters many solutions to improve the public spaces of Villa 31 are proposed, some of them referring to temporary interventions of unspecified duration, it would be necessary to close the circle and so to prove the validity of some of them to do a practical job of implementing some of these proposals, and study the reaction and involvement of the inhabitants, how the use and maintenance of the structures change over time, and how small interventions change the way people relate to public space.

A simple intervention, such as the one described above, realized in a short time, with little material, immediately aroused the great movement of people interested in the initiative, curious, and willing to

understand the dynamics of the process and its potential. This is the reaction that one would like to have with the implementation of the proposals presented in the previous chapter: a voluntary participation of the inhabitants of Villa 31 in creating their public spaces to live.

The goal of this project was to draw the attention on the critical elements in the city of Buenos Aires, that were promoted by the government. Building electric catwalks on a sidewalk, without any kind of shelter, and without providing any maintenance, is a useless intervention. When these equipment's were working, they were probably already an urban element of little utility, as a distance of 20/30 meters might have been sped up only with the savings of a few seconds on the whole walk, but now that these structures are broken and dangerous, they represent waste and no care for public space. It is interesting that these objects are right in front of one of the entries in Villa 31, because they characterize exactly the indifference and carelessness of the quality of the public space that is offered to its citizens.

This small example can be part of a long list of ridiculous, unnecessary or misleading actions implemented in the city, that instead of providing people spaces to enjoy, they cause disillusionment and disappointment. With the intervention Buenos Aires 31, it was intended to prove that it is possible to transform and reuse what is already there, as in this case, the broken electric catwalks that are not eliminated or hidden but become the protagonists and integral part of the rehabilitation of the space; they are transformed into a temporary play area, waiting for them to be adjusted or removed to provide a better furnishing for the site.

When we decided to realize this intervention, we didn't know what to expect, which kind of reaction and collaboration from the people, and this is exactly how it meant to be, we didn't want to create or impose a space to offer to the people, we wanted to generate it with them accordingly to their needs, desire to do and creativity; and this is what happened. This workshop's experience helped me to believe in my project, in my proposals and in the idea that it is possible to change a space, profiting from its weaknesses and problems and transform them into advantages and possibilities.

Attached to this thesis can be found the video recorded during the day of the urban intervention "Buenos Aires 31".

6.4 PROPOSAL AND PLANS

"Investigar es producir conocimientos, desarrollar categorías y productos capaces de servir a la comprensión y transformación de nuestros contextos. Proyectar es anticipar lo por venir, proponer una

imagen compartida, especificar una organización superadora de la preexistencia. Articular es amalgamar opuestos, sintetizar lo inconexo, construir un nuevo espacio social allí donde parecía imposible."¹³⁷(Javier Fernández Castro, 2010)

The urban project is a process of synthesis understood not as a linear summary but as a complex integration, of mutating the lack in possibility, of including the excluded. The public space, the infrastructures, and the public facilities, define the formal city. Hence to make sure that the informal city embraces the features of the formal city on its own, design and planning must pursue some fundamental pillars: democratize the enjoyment of urbanity; favour the connectivity of the urban structure, respect the historical configuration; ensure accessibility; tend to the maximum of rooting; promote new and old centralities; cause a drastic change of image; seek community participation; produce cohesion by articulating heterogeneous logics.¹³⁸



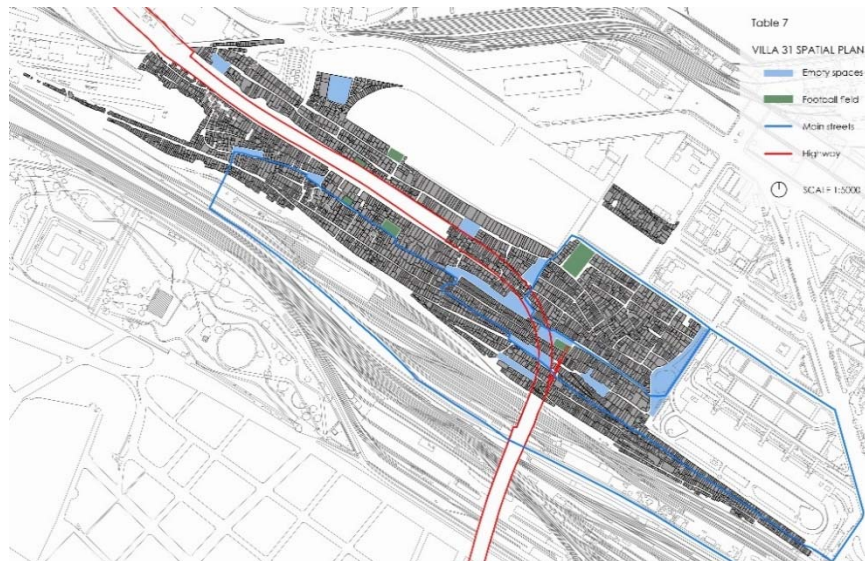
57. Villa 31 sectors plan, Annex 6 for the real scale

¹³⁷ *To research is to produce knowledge, to develop categories and products capable of serving the understanding and transformation of our contexts.*

To project is to anticipate what is to come, to propose a shared image, to specify an organization that overcomes the pre-existence.

To articulate is to amalgamate the opposites, to synthesize the unconnected, to build a new social space where it seemed impossible.

¹³⁸ Fernández Castro, J., & Jauregui, J. (2010). *Articulaciones urbanas- Un proyecto para el Barrio 31 de Retiro.*



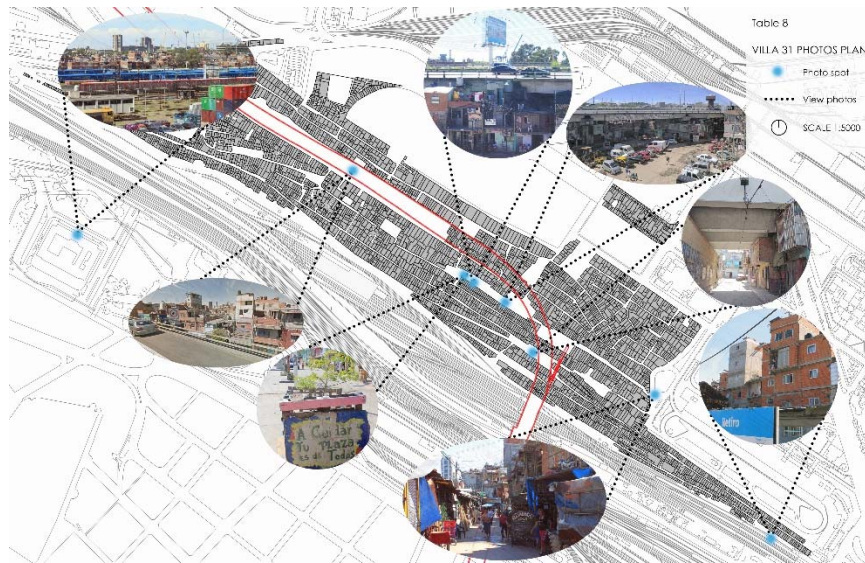
58. Villa 31 spatial plan, Annex 7 for the real scale

6.4.1 CRITICAL ISSUES

Before making some proposals for the "self-public planning" of Villa 31, the critical issues encountered within this district were analysed in order to formulate ideas aimed at solving the problems that exist and that were declared by the people that suffer from them, indeed the Latin American reality is characterised by constant precariousness and adversity in tragically unstable socio-economic contexts.

The most evident critical features of the area are represented by the Illia highway, which crosses Villa 31; the absence of green areas and trees; the absence of public transport; empty spaces used as parking areas, unpaved roads and consequent floods; empty areas without use; absence of public spaces.

The map below tries to show where the main problems that will be presented in the next paragraphs are located accordingly to the photographic relief that was conducted. The photos were taken both from the inside of the *villa* and from the outside, to get a wider view of the site. The images from Google street views were also helpful to show some perspectives, from hard-to-reach places, such as photos showing the study area from the highway.



59. Villa 31 photos plan, Annex 8 for the real scale

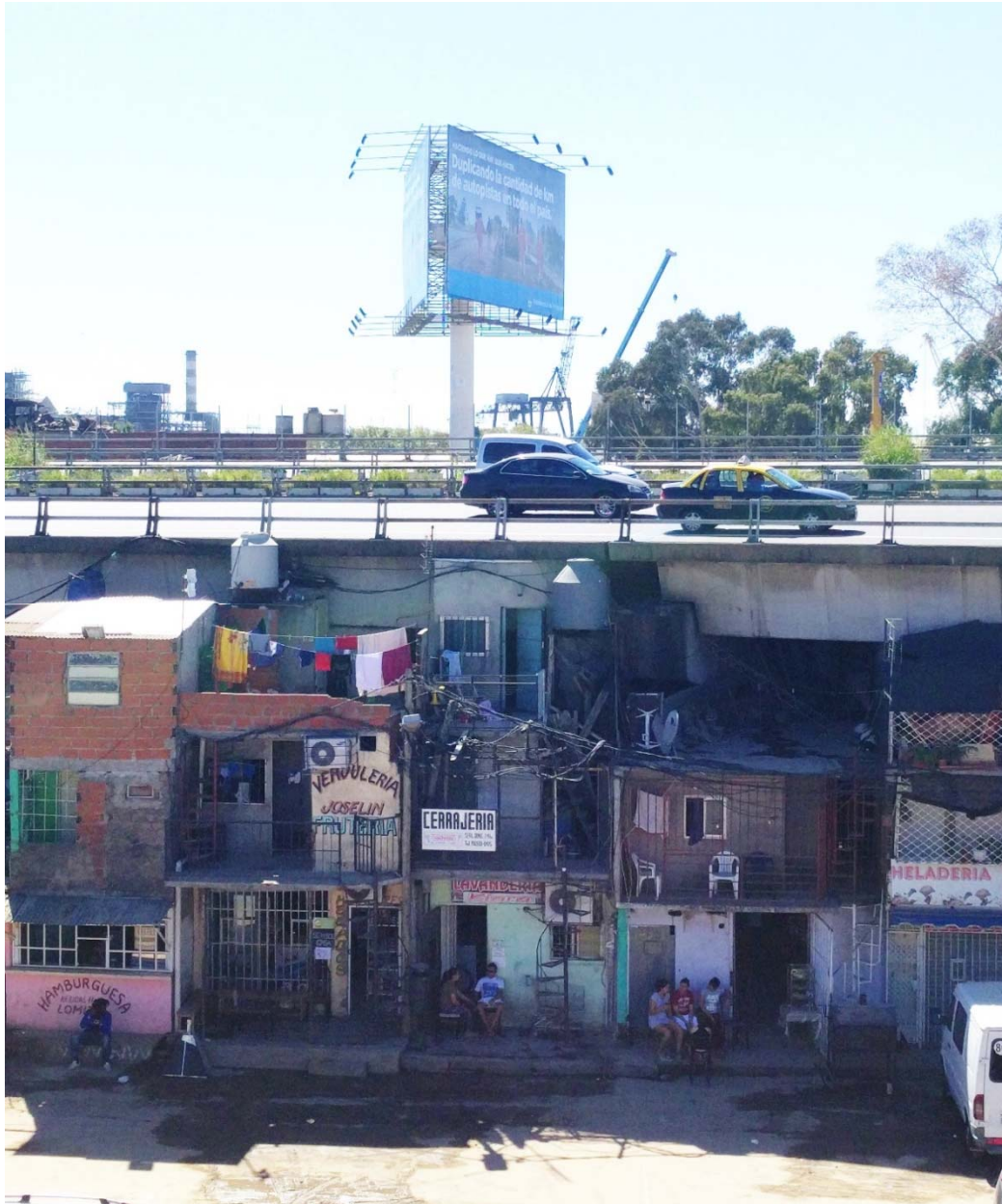
The main obstacle is the highway Dr. Arturo Umberto Illia (AV1 Norte); that represents the access to the centre of the city of Buenos Aires, and crosses Villa 31. The construction of this section of the highway did start a controversy with the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, as the government started to expropriate lands of the *villa* (eradication). In the areas where the highway becomes elevated, the houses have been built below it and some of them even exceed its height, and it is precisely in these situations that you see the windows of the houses facing the highway. However, in the areas where the highway is at the ground level, it splits Villa 31 into two big sectors, promoting the segregation within the neighbourhood itself. It is not only the ugliness and the massive impact of the intervention to be considered a problem, the most critical situation arises when we think about the danger to which the houses built under the highway (Bajo Autopista sector) are exposed every day, and with all the concerning unhealthy situations which are generated because of this action.



60. View of Villa 31 from the highway Illia. Relation between the highway and the houses, google street view.



61. View of Villa 31 from the highway Illia: a big empty space inside the villa, google street view.



62. Houses built under the highway: sector Autopista, google street view.



63. Particular of the attachment of houses to the highway, google street view.



64. Houses and streets built under the highway, google street view.

Another main problem is the lack of green areas, the inexistence of trees and consequently the absence of shadow. The few open spaces of Villa 31, are left empty, not paved, like the rest of the neighbourhood, and devoid of any kind of arboreal species. The lack of green makes the air inside the *villa* very heavy, and on the absurdly hot summer days of the Argentinean capital it is impossible to stay outdoors, outside

of the houses, because of the lack of shelter and shade. When you walk through the streets of the *villa*, the ground-floor that acts as a pavement reflects the strong South American sunlight that dazzles with its glare, and the dust that raises makes intolerable the permanence outside of the house. Rarely you can find some solitary trees protected by small fences, which represent the desire of the inhabitants to improve the *villa*, the aspiration to live in a greener and healthier space.



65. Little tree in a square of Villa 31, Elena Parnisari.

Another issue that must be taken into account is the absence of public transport inside Villa 31; buses or ambulances cannot access because the streets are too narrow for it, and so if any medical emergency occurs there is no way for the emergency vehicle to move around the villa to carry the person in need. The problem arises not only when there is an emergency, but also on a daily basis considering the inability of people that have mobility problems to move around, such as elderly people or people on wheelchairs. The lack of public transport makes it difficult to move inside the neighbourhood and thus to reach other parts of the city.

The inexistence of public transport relates to the parking problem, in fact that are few streets that connect Villa 31 with the main roads outside, where cars manage to pass through and then they all stop in the few empty spaces that exist inside of the *villa*; for that reason, those spaces are converted into parking lots. The lack of initiative for a qualifying project that could really transform these empty spaces leads to the casual occupation of these areas depending on the needs of the moment.



66. Parking lots inside an empty space of Villa 31, google street view.

Other correlated issues concern the streets that are not paved, they are too narrow, and they suffer from flooding because there are no manholes and sewerage system of white and black waters. So, when it rains it becomes impossible to walk in the streets, as these turns into rivers; and considering that they are not paved, the ground, mixed with water, creates a muddy and slippery soil. Furthermore, the streets,

too narrow and tight, become places of crime, favoured by the dark and isolated environment that is created.

The characteristics of Villa 31's spaces, with its lack of infrastructure and public spaces adapted to the conviviality of its inhabitants, have led to a proliferation of illegal activities, such as drug use and distribution, which often also involve children.

Finally, we must not forget the problem of omnipresent garbage in the *villa*. Huge quantities of waste, that residents do not know where to dispose, since the neighbourhood has not been equipped with special waste disposal containers, crowded the void spaces in the neighbourhood, creating a discomfort and abandonment, as well as an unhealthy environment, proliferating mice and consequently diseases.



67. View of Villa 31 from Libertador Avenue, behind the railroad tracks, Elena Parnisari



68. View of Villa 31 from the platforms of Retiro train station, Elena Parnisari



69. Limit between Villa 31 and the platform of Retiro train station: border between the informal and the formal city, Elena Parnisari

6.4.2 STRATEGY OF INTERVENTION

“Shantytowns as spaces of resistance, places in which original forms of socialisation, alternative economies, and various forms of aesthetic agency are produced.” (Carlos Basualdo, 2003)

The strategy for the renovation and integration of Villa 31 in the city of Buenos Aires should focus on the ambition of qualifying its public spaces and changing the image of the neighbourhood. The strategies for intervention can be divided into three main groups where the operation should focus: people, environment and action.

First, people should be at the centre of the proposal, the different personality of the inhabitants of the *villa* must be considered when a change is proposed in the area. Indeed, residents must be part of the decision making, they shouldn't wake up one day with workers outside of their door, having no idea of what is going to happen and which changes the place where they are living will suffer, as many of the inhabitants of Villa 31 said regarding the project proposal made by the government. The voices of the inhabitants must be heard because they are the structure itself of the place they live in. A new project plan should promote high sociability, social integration and community participation. The residents should be part of the project stage and of the building stage as well, as their homes were built by themselves, they should also be part of the process of improving the public spaces. In fact, that's why the name “Self-public planning” is important, because the people who live in it were actually the ones that made Villa 31. A new intervention must focus on the solidarity inside of the *villa*, and a special attention should be paid to women, elderly people and children, who are always the most disadvantaged subjects of Argentine society, who are not listened to, and suffer from abuses and prevarications. The new public spaces of Villa 31 should promote connectivity, these places should gather people together and promote the encounter between the neighbours. Residents must reach a physical proximity in the qualified spaces, helped by a good visual and physical accessibility of the different spots.

The whole environment of Villa 31 should encourage serenity, and consequently public awareness and trust of the place and of the people. Security must be pursued; no violence should exist in the *villa* and enjoyment of the outdoor life should be a right for everyone.

One of the main goals of the project should be to overcome the barrier that nowadays prevails between the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and Villa 31, made possible primarily by the recognition of the limit between them. Finally, a voluntary action and construction must be perpetrated, but with the regulation of the concept of property, that would give a legal and social security to the inhabitants.

About the action underlying the project the key word is spontaneity; in fact, simple strategies and tactics must be pursued to reach the best possible change of the place with a low risk of failure, and keeping the identity of the neighbourhood and of the neighbours. The proposal should follow and try to implement the practices of tactical urbanism, realizing short-term actions and implementing temporary solutions, indeed the operations don't have to be necessarily permanent, and should consider a fast application of the approved strategies.

To ensure that the proposal is coherent, it must try to be sustainable and low-cost; the use of recycled and natural materials could be an option that doesn't pollute or produce any waste and that allows to work with imagination, finding another way of employing materials and objects already used for different scopes.

Villa 31 has some characteristic symbols that should be maintained and improved. The current image and personality of the neighbourhood shouldn't change drastically and for that reason is important to maintain certain elements; such as the spiral stairs outside of every single house, that make the connection between one floor and the other, the football fields that are the only recreational area that exist, and the roofs, the terraces and the streets as places where people can gather.

Lastly, music and poetry, and local artists, must be supported and protected.

6.4.3 IDEAS

*"E tutto quel ch'una ruina involve."*¹³⁹ (Francesco Petrarca, 1374)

Like in every creative process, at the beginning of a project a stream of consciousness and of ideas, that could be proposed for the improvement of Villa 31, has emerged.

Children represent that part of the society that is left alone in the neighbourhood, once their parents are working all day long or they are involved in risky situations, and since not all the kids have access to schools, they are spending their days in the streets. In the neighbourhood, existing empty areas playgrounds and sport facilities should find their place; the football fields are not enough as spaces of recreation for children and they are monotonous; even though these spaces should be maintained and upgraded, different sport courts could be implemented to enrich the variety of activities to offer to the

¹³⁹ "And all that the ruin involves."

young community. A project like the vertical gym of Alfredo Brillembourg, previously presented, could be a good motivation to take advantage of the development of a sports facility in height that doesn't exploit all the few existing empty spaces; nonetheless even simple open-air playgrounds spread in the area would be enough, as initial improvement.

As it has already been said, in Villa 31 there is a lack of green areas and elements, which at first sight represents one of its most evident problems. The simple action of planting a tree could help to change the whole image and physical and visual sensation of the area. Planting trees along the streets and make more green spaces, such as little parks or green squares, should be carried out. Ideas such as the establishment of social gardens and urban orchards in the empty spaces of the area, or in the backyards of the house, when it exists, are of easy realization and of high fruition for the inhabitants. Terraces and roofs could also host vertical gardens, that can be used and managed by the residents of each housing complex. On the roof of the houses could be also installed systems for rainwater collection and water recycling, that could be used, for example, to feed the plants, without wasting any water coming from the water supply system.

As we all know food connects people; so, in the moment when you sit at the table to have lunch or dinner, you enjoy your meal better if the dish side is a good conversation with friends. That's why a system of canteens for workers, children, housewives or other residents should be implemented, a place where to have good food to share with the others is an important issue that must be considered. It could be simply organized by people of the neighbourhood, to have a daily reunion, or just a special occasion canteen. It could be introduced even a food bank, for the neediest, with a food-share system and a local production. These social canteens could be associated with co-working and integrative spaces to promote education through the neighbourhood, and with a primary and secondary health care facility including a first aid room, because right now the attention to the health sphere is missing.

And finally, it is important to promote the improvement of the already existing commercial spaces and the creation of new ones. In this way, a network that connects alimentation, education, health and commerce facilities could start to upgrade the living and social conditions in Villa 31.

Talking merely about space, first streets must be recovered and they should be paved, and maybe with a decorated asphalt, to create a network of lanes inside the area that connects all the public spaces and all the new facilities. Signage must be implemented pointing out the directions of the different places of interest, and the presence of luminaries should be increased to make the site safer and more pleasant even in the evening. Some streets could become open air art studios, where youth could express themselves with graffiti, paintings and photographs exhibitions on the walls. In the new squares, urban

furniture should be provided, to let people stay longer in these open spaces and take a rest. Create places to sit should be the first thing to do; nowadays there are no places where to sit around in the *villa*, and people bring their chairs out of the houses. The new benches should be attractive to make people use them, and mobile furniture could be a good idea, so in these way people decide where they need them in every different occasion. Swing seats could be funny for the children and could help to improve the appearance of the space, seeing something different from the usual furnishings.

All these new proposals could be defined as interventions of “urban acupuncture”, a terminology coined by Urban-Think Tank, to define pressure points of generation as an alternative to government master plans. They must invest in the spaces, transforming them like a breath of fresh air that brings revitalization and joy, with an archetypical concern.

The memory of the past should be maintained; indeed, nostalgia of the past should be projected in hope for the future. People in slums keep inventing themselves with an informal survival, that’s why the beauty of slum architecture makes sense for the people who live and create that place.

“The slum, however, is not merely an empirical object or a spatial container of social processes and effects. Instead it is a discursive object, at once material and imaginary, that has significant theoretic effects.” (Vyjayanthi Rao, 2010)

6.4.4 THE CONCEPT

The concept behind the proposal starts with the idea of listening to people - hearing the voice of the inhabitants -, and then understanding what they want and what they are willing to do to improve their own place. Here is the explanation of the importance of interviewing inhabitants; to put people in the foreground and not the project. Nonetheless a truly participatory process is not limited to interviews conducted separately with different people. In fact, an organized discussion path regarding a future project should be pursued, involving all the stakeholders in the participatory design process in order to help to create a product that can meet their needs. Unfortunately, it was not possible to conduct this process due to time constraints, and the lack of a strong enough support to initiate such an action. But, although limited, the interviews that were held and mentioned before have already served as a starting point of great help for the formulation of this proposal.

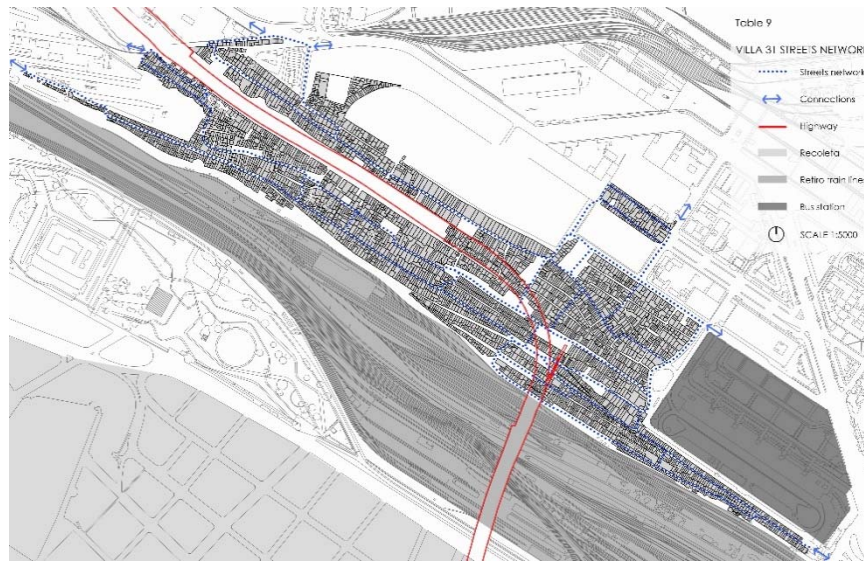
Furthermore, it is also clear that many of the spaces and interventions needed in Villa 31 cannot go together with the concept of tactical urbanism, to offer only simple solutions and of indefinite durability,

since some areas in the neighbourhood would require massive interventions in order to achieve a qualitative and quantitative improvement of the space; they would require a big help from the state, with architectural works and important funding. For example, about the enlargement of some streets, to make possible to access buses and rescue vehicles, it would therefore require the demolition of some buildings and their consequent re-location. Structures for youth centres, retirement and recovery centres, schools, and sports halls, are all facilities that should be made of a certain solidity with a good constructive quality, to provide the community with a safe meeting space.

Besides all the achievements one could meet in a different framework – with state intervention and considerable funding – the main idea for the whole area is to create a network of primary streets, connected between each other, and linked to the public spaces, in order to create a clearer reading of place and landscape to guide people through the mazy streets of the *villa* and to make them reach the different points of interest.

The maps that are presented below illustrate these paths and points of interest on two different scales to favour a better reading of the urban fabric. The accesses to the *villa* are highlighted; the main paths where ideally convey the flow of people, making the routes more attractive and keeping the privacy of smaller and secondary roads are considered; and the relationship between Villa 31 inserted in the city panorama and the omnipresent highway, the Retiro station, the bus station and the Recoleta neighbourhood, one of the great symbols of the city, is also presented.

Firstly, it's important to define the main paths inside the *villa*, so that it can be easily connected with the other neighbourhoods of the city, having clear and visible entrances and exits helps to break the limit that currently exists, while Villa 31 seems to hide behind the facades of the skyscrapers of Buenos Aires. A road net with a strong structure helps to make the different sectors more recognizable, improves people's mobility and the physical and visual permeability of the space.



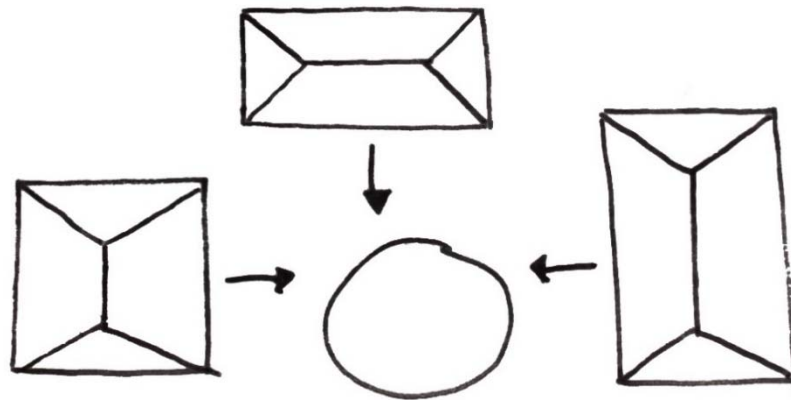
70. Villa 31 streets network plan, Annex 9 for the real scale



71. Villa 31 connections plan, Annex 10 for the real scale

What has emerged as a missing element of the neighbourhood and fundamental space for the community is a square, a meeting point, a public space where people can get together and stay together, and it is precisely in the empty spaces already existing in the neighbourhood that should be shaped into this new idea of a square (or several squares), meant as the backyard of the houses, where different activities and different uses are made, without defining a clear division between them but creating dynamic and interconnected spaces.

= Talleres de imaginarios =



72. Concept of the project: workshops of imaginaries, bring the social space outside of the house

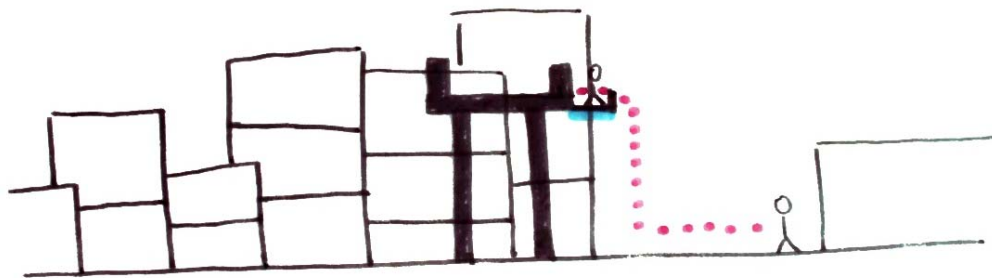
So, the main idea is to start looking at all the empty spaces that exist in Villa 31, big and small, and connect them all through a network of main roads or paths that act as direct links between a public space and the other. The idea is that by implementing this network, all squares or collective meeting spaces have a recognizable main entry and exit, guiding people through the labyrinth of the *villa* to reach the next space. One of the possible ways to make these connections recognizable is to pave the streets, and then colour them with a geometric pattern that resembles the characteristic colours of the dwellings: these paintings will make the space more attractive, clear, bright and secure, and will also serve as a way to make the urban network and the relation between places more comprehensible.

Every empty space will host a square, intended as a meeting point where various activities are being carried out. A square can be understood as a green area, a social garden, for example, cared by the tenants of the adjacent houses, a playground where children can play, an outdoor sports area that is not limited to the usual soccer field, an art space where residents can express their talent with graffiti, art and photography exhibitions, and a well-organized market place. The idea is that all these different spaces and functions are not necessarily defined, they should coexist all together, and with their expansion they should draw the site, they should integrate and merge with each other. All these new places together will be considered as the backyard that no one have inside this dense neighbourhood; in this way, what happens inside of the house, can also happen outside with the encounter of other people.

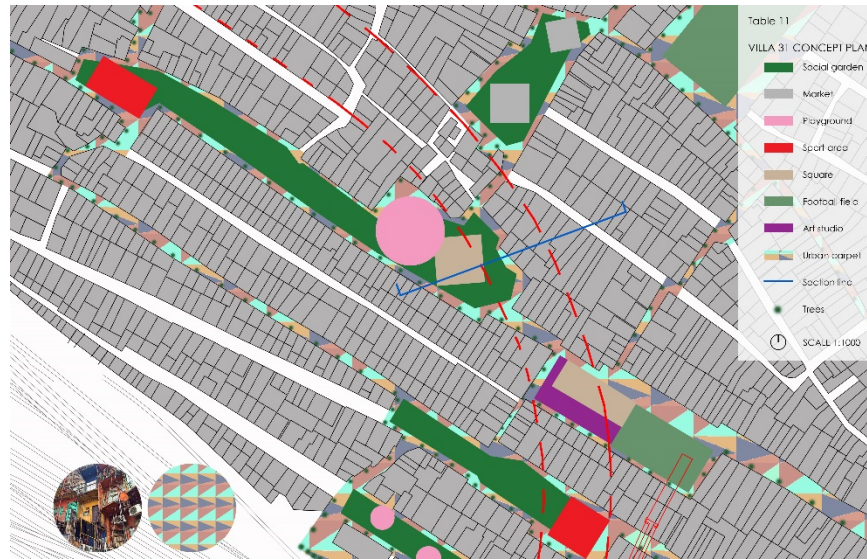
As far as the realization of these spaces is concerned, the ideal thing would be the voluntary realization of them by reinventing the uses of objects that are already available to the residents.

A social garden could start for example with the initiative “plant a tree”. It would be enough if every family would plant a single tree to greening the neighbourhood, or those who have a terrace, a balcony or a roof that they can use, transform it into a vertical orchard. The art studio would come from the initiatives and works of the artists that would visually decorate the space. And as far as the playing spaces are concerned, it could be possible to take a cue from the spaces that children are already inventing, where a rope lying on the ground is enough to delimit a volleyball court, as was already noted.

A somewhat more ambitious project, but still achievable with willpower, would be to create a 1,5m wide walkway, lower than the highway level, which functions as an elevated connection within the neighbourhood, and that could take advantage of the roofs of the houses if these do not have a use and are at an appropriate height. This walkway would act as a green corridor, which could mitigate the obstacle of the highway in the elevated sections. The connection between this footbridge and the ground floor would be made through spiral stairs, which are a characteristic of the dwellings. The walkway would consist of a metal and wood structure simply bolted to the reinforced concrete beams of the highway, this does not involve any massive work as the structure would be lightweight and easy to implement.



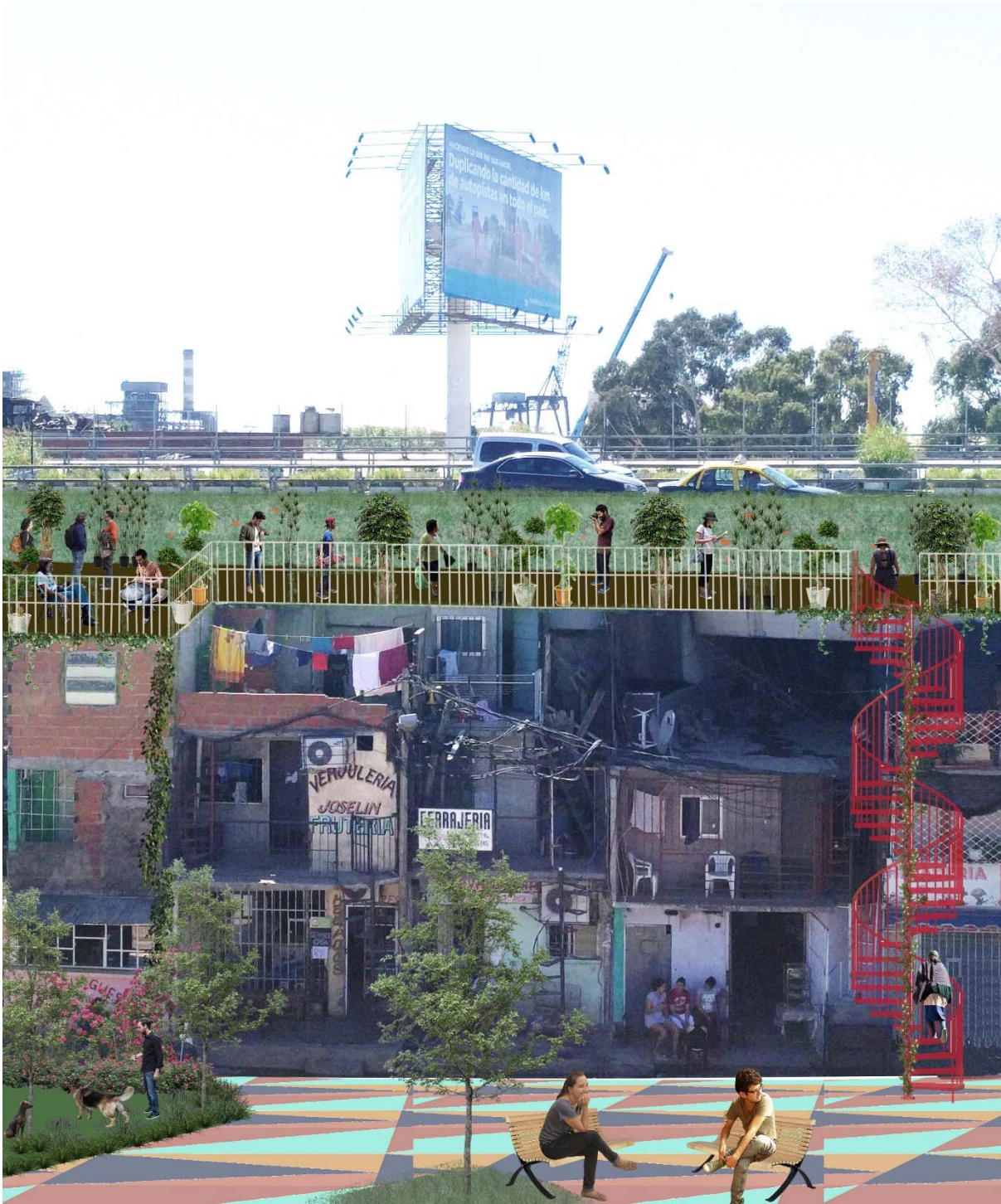
73. Footbridge connection attached to the highway



74. Villa 31 concept plan, Annex 11 for the real scale

These techniques are simple and inexpensive solutions that would not be very difficult to integrate within the neighbourhood.

The whole strategy relies on the concept of transforming the lacks into possibilities, of dealing with the problems and turning them into capabilities, including the excluded. At the end, what is intended is to transform Villa 31 into a dynamic neighbourhood where to create dynamic spaces in continuous movement and change that, as well as people who live there, go and come and have different needs that materialize differently.



75. Photomontage of a new public space in Villa 31, Elena Parnisari



76. Photomontage of the new concept of streets in Villa 31, Elena Parnisari



77. Section of Autopista sector, Elena Parnisari



78. Touristic map of Buenos Aires, where Villa 31 is represented as a green area of the city, Elena Parnisari

Eventually, all the projects and interventions that are being proposed to improve Villa 31 must aim at making this area a formal neighbourhood of the city that deserves to appear on the maps and that is not ignored or “erased” as if it was a green cut out area of the city, as sadly happens today.

Reassuming it can be said that the proposals for the renovation of the public spaces of Villa 31 find their beginning in the definition “*Playón*”. A word that literally means something flat, shallow, word with which the inhabitants of the *villa* call the big empty space that exists in the middle of the area, in the sector Autopista. When they refer to this space, as place of reference inside the area, the imaginary that one has is that of a large, flat and desolate land, and this is exactly what it looks like. This word has been imprinted in my mind since the first moment I heard it, because this space really represents a central point of reference of the *villa*, but even though it is defined as such, the only feature of centrality that it has is its geographical position. It is precisely from this contradiction that the above-mentioned ideas have arisen, the will to transform these empty spaces, the various *playón*, into spaces where different

activities can be developed and interconnected between each other, actions or happenings that the inhabitants themselves can define and shape according to the different neighbourhood needs.

These proposals want to be a closing inspiration for a future project, a path that could be undertaken by putting forward a real participatory process realized by a competent team and by the locals themselves, with the same willpower that they put into building their homes: this way it would help to bring the hearth of the house out of it, building common values by addressing and making possible the popular imagination.

7

CONCLUSION

*“La calle es el museo más democrático del mundo.”*¹⁴⁰ (Boa Mistura, 2016)

This research sought to answer the initial questions: is it possible to bring outside of the house the convivial space that exists partially inside it, focusing on the poor habitats of Latin America that suffer from the lack of public spaces? Is it important to create these common spaces for people gathering? Trying to address this purpose, an investigation has been conducted on the specific case of Argentine slums, and more precisely on Villa 31 in Buenos Aires.

The initial goal of the work was to understand the phenomenon of slum’s formation and development, the role of the state regarding this issue with its politics, the problems and the potentialities of those spaces. And starting from this analysis the research was further developed by focusing on a case study to better explore these concepts and to come up with examples of procedures or types of solutions that could be replicated in similar situations, focusing mainly on the importance of the public space system and on the priority granted to the people’s voices, ensuring that each person feels part of this space as well as creator and promoter of it.

The tools used to develop the research were initially focused mainly on study papers about these themes, historical documents and specific data, passing by projects realized and not, in order to create a solid foundation on which to base ideas and proposals. The focus shifted then to a social dimension of the problem, which focused more on the human aspect of the research itself, considering the voice of people, and above all my personal views derived from my own experience of the area, with the aim of succeeding in transmitting to the reader the complexity, the polemics, the mixed feelings of

¹⁴⁰ *The street is the most democratic museum in the world.*

frustration and excitement that arise at the same time when one thinks about the multiple issues confronting on this subject.

The results obtained, linked to the technical assumptions that have been made, have led me to get the inspiration for social change, to generate a positive revolution in communities and to see a project that is achieved through the unity of the community and guarantees that its inhabitants feel like a fundamental part of the design of their own space. The definition of proposals within a framework of public participation can serve as a catalyst to create positive changes in the present society, developing the attitude of the people and giving visibility to them and to the spaces that they inhabit.

The most important result that has emerged is the demonstration of the importance of public spaces, and the imperative of finding ways to generate better conditions of liveability in them, throughout many different possibilities of change. A public space should be done collectively and collaboratively with the neighbours of the space itself: the streets and squares should favour their use by the citizens, making them feel really the owners of its so that they can understand, take care and improve it. Finally, the implementation of the proposal itself should be lived as a festive moment, celebrating the place where the neighbours join together, coexist and make use of its common spaces.

To get to give answers to the questions raised at the beginning of the research, it was crucial to conduct an analysis of the case study to understand the dynamics and structure of the treated area. Of fundamental importance and help, as a great support, were the projects analysed, aimed at the requalification of the site, and the examples from other South American cities were significant as well. Both cases have helped to understand the dynamics that exist in a context of urban poverty, which are the strategies that can be put in place to formulate a proposal or even simple suggestions aimed at improving the existing public space, and in some cases the creation of them when those are inexistent, and to promote the importance of the collective and collaborative dimension within a participatory project. This research is intended to serve as a starting point no longer for the formulation of a new project to be developed in Villa 31, but on the contrary, it wants to serve as a support for ideas and concepts that can be implemented by the residents themselves together with the works that are already in progress, in order to make the urbanization of the *villa* a participatory process. Simple and fast strategies such as those proposed by tactical urbanism can be implemented along with the giga-projects of relocating houses, building new edifices and infrastructures to emphasize the importance of the public space, seen as an extension of the house, and not as a marginal space without a destination.

A self-criticism to present on the research produced might be that of not having further developed some issues in order to achieve a more in-depth view on some aspects like the aesthetic perspective, that generates changes in the communities where it is located; to have only briefly stated some concepts, because of the lack of time to deepen everything as it was intended to do at the beginning; and the fact that the research didn't conclude with a real participatory project put into practice, but only with a hint at this aspect of the research.

Taking this into account the present document could be further developed and contemplate the practical experimentation of the proposed methodology, with the implementation of the suggested tactics and the consequent analysis of their development and their success or failure, as well as revising some concepts, and understand if they are meaningful and supportive to the thesis, or if they deserve to be deepened or transformed into something different and more stimulating for the research. Another interesting action to be considered in the future is to continue with the interviews, to expand the network of knowledge and gain greater support for a future project. Considering the state achievements and the absences of the research that has been developed so far, the suggestions and recommendations for a starting point for a future research work would contemplate the discussion of topics and new tracks to follow that could be related to the process of gentrification, which seems inevitable as a result of the urbanization of Villa 31. It would be interesting to generate thoughts on the possible future of this space rather than focusing only on the actions to be undertaken today. Other factors that can be improved in subsequent studies could be focused on the limitations that were encountered during the writing, due to the limited knowledge of the language of the country of study, to the intercultural approach that initially turned out to be a real challenge, and to the limits imposed by the site and those concerned, where it was difficult to get involved and to let the inhabitants of Villa 31 know the project and the research that I was carrying on. *"Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody."* (Jane Jacobs, 1961)

This thesis represents only the conclusion of an investigation that goes into the problem of informal habitats, urban poverty and urban segregation, but it has given me much: during this year of research I have gone through many personal challenges, that the reality of the country where I found myself conducting the research has put me in front. With this research, I wanted to confirm the importance of people in the composition of the city scenario, and the importance of being part of a public space, once without this fundamental element of the community a particular space cannot be defined as such, public or, even better, collective.

"People are at the heart of all cities."

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APPENDICES

ABEL ALEGRE, 24/03/2017



79. Interview with Abel Alegre, Elena Parnisari.

Name, nationality, profession.

My name is Abel Matías Alegre, I am 26 years old, I am an employee and I am Argentinian.

How long have you lived in Buenos Aires and in which neighbourhood do you live?

I grew up here in Buenos Aires, in Retiro, especially in Villa 31.

What is a public space for you?

A public space is a place that we all share, where there is space for recreation, where you can pass the time.

Which would be a word to describe Buenos Aires? Which are the positive and the negative aspects of the city?

The city of Buenos Aires is a large, cosmopolitan place, and it has its good places and bad places, which can be improved over time.

What do you know about Villa 31? Of its history and of its actuality?

About Villa 31 I know very little, I know that it dates to the '60s, '70s, when the immigrants came to Argentina for a better life; some came from Europe, some came from bordering countries to find better well-being.

What does Villa 31 represent for you in one word?

Villa 31 is the place where I grew up, it is the place where I would like to live and I would like to have my little grain of sand and change the situation of the neighbourhood.

What do you think is missing in Villa 31?

In Villa 31 there are many things missing, for example a wider urbanization, with integration. In the *villa* there are many spaces, they are very small places, but I have faith that they will create more public spaces and it will be urbanized over time.

How do you imagine a public space in Villa 31?

For me I would like to have a space where I can spend time, to share with neighbours, friends, people around you, and make it a quiet place where there is no violence, where you do not see people who are doing bad things and people hurting. This would be my place, the place that I would like to have.

How would you call a new public space in Villa 31?

Espacio público para todos, Public space for everyone.

AUTORIZACIÓN DE USO DE DERECHOS DE IMAGEN Y CONTENIDOS

A los 24 días del mes de ABRIL de 2017.

Yo ABEL, nacionalidad ARGENTINO,

DNI / Pasaporte 35630124, con domicilio en la calle M.21 CS3.

En este acto, declaro:

Autorizar el uso de mi imagen y testimonios en la OBRA AUDIOVISUAL titulada
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Dicha autorización comprende el derecho de reproducción, distribución y comunicación al público y no implica derecho de remuneración previsto en el Art. 56 de la ley 11.723 de Propiedad Intelectual y de gestión colectiva obligatoria por parte de SAGAI conforme a lo dispuesto en el Decreto 1914/06..

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Firma del Autorizante



Aclaración

Abel ALERES

Lugar y Fecha

BUENOS AIRES

En caso de menores de edad completar los siguientes datos:

Firma del Padre o Madre/Tutor

Aclaración

Documento

ADRIANA DUPREZ, 20/03/2017



80. Interview with Adriana Duprez, Elena Parnisari.

Name, nationality, profession.

My name is Adriana Duprez, I am Argentinian and I am a lawyer.

How long have you lived in Buenos Aires and in which neighbourhood do you live?

I've lived here in Buenos Aires for 20 years, in the neighbourhood of Recoleta.

What is a public space for you?

For me a public space is a place where anyone can access without asking for permission.

Which would be a word to describe Buenos Aires? Which are the positive and the negative aspects of the city?

A word to describe Buenos Aires would be "madness". A good thing would be the madness itself and a bad thing the madness as well.

What do you know about Villa 31? Of its history and of its actuality?

About Villa 31 I know how it has been shaped more or less in the last decades, how it has been enlarging in recent years, the need that exists, and the plans about its urbanization.

How do you see the future of Villa 31?

The future of Villa 31...I do not know if there is an easy solution. There are problems because there are plans for its urbanization, especially because this land has a lot of value and therefore there are social sectors that want to make real estate ventures. On the other hand, many people live in Villa 31 and they need an effective solution to the housing problem. So, I do not know if they are going to be able to make compatible the two issues and therefore I do not know if they will have solutions for the two projects that are being considered right now.

How do you imagine a public space in Villa 31?

In fact, In Villa 31 they need places for recreation and containment especially for the young community and children, considering the problems that exist in the city of Buenos Aires. Then they need places of containment, of entertainment, but at the same time they need to give solutions to problems that are becoming more acute every day: canteens, first aid rooms, primary and secondary health care, education. Everything is needed in there, but above all containment and the presence of state, to help and to see how to get out of certain problems, and not to criminalize. A future project must include the *villa* in the city basically, and not exclude it. The *villa* has a problem that is fundamental: people living inside the *villa* are excluded from the society, so the idea would be to include them and let this neighbourhood be part of the city of Buenos Aires.

How would you call a new public space in Villa 31?

Incluir la Villa 31 en la ciudad, Embrace Villa 31 in the city.

AUTORIZACIÓN DE USO DE DERECHOS DE IMAGEN Y CONTENIDOS

A los 20 días del mes de Febrero de 2017.

Yo Adriana Duprez, nacionalidad Argentina,

DNI / Pasaporte 2683328, con domicilio en la calle Peña 2781.

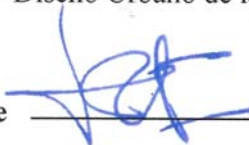
En este acto, declaro:

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Firma del Autorizante



Aclaración

Adriana Duprez

Lugar y Fecha

Bs. As. 20/03/2017

En caso de menores de edad completar los siguientes datos:

Firma del Padre o Madre/Tutor

Aclaración

Documento

ANGELINA PENAYO, 30/03/2017



81. Interview with Angelina Aguilera Penayo, Elena Parnisari.

Name, nationality, profession.

My name is Aguilera Angelina, I am a housewife, I have 4 children, I am Paraguayan.

How long have you lived in Buenos Aires and in which neighbourhood do you live?

I've lived here for 20 years, and I live in Villa 31 Bis, Retiro, block number 11, house number 838.

What is a public space for you?

For me a public space is a place to share with people, for children to play.

Which would be a word to describe Buenos Aires? Which are the positive and the negative aspects of the city?

The city of Buenos Aires has good things for me, although people see many bad things. There are policies, education institutions that are bad because the government is not doing well, this year we are bad.

What do you know about Villa 31? Of its history and of its actuality?

From the history of Villa 31 I do not know anything. Of the projects, I now know that they are doing streets, houses, courts, sewers, gas and light arrangements.

What does Villa 31 represent for you in one word?

For me Villa 31 is a neighbourhood, a decent neighbourhood, there are people that work, there are people who study. For me it's all quiet, I cannot complain, it's been 19 years that I'm here in Villa 31 and I do not complain about anything, I get things here and there's help.

What do you think is missing in Villa 31?

For me there is nothing missing, for those who have no motor disabilities there is nothing lacking in Villa 31. But as for my children, who are on the wheelchair, and for the other neighbours with the same problems there are a lot of things missing: the buses cannot enter here nor the ambulance. It would be nice if there were more spaces for the kids who are in a wheelchair. This is a situation that I can raise: the issue of being able to enter ambulances. We do not have the comfort of going out with the kids in a wheelchair, but if you walk you can do everything here.

How would you call a new public space in Villa 31?

Colectivo público en la Villa 31 Bis, Public bus in the Villa 31 Bis.

AUTORIZACIÓN DE USO DE DERECHOS DE IMAGEN Y CONTENIDOS

A los 30 días del mes de Marzo de 2017.

Yo Angelina Aguilera Penayo nacionalidad Paraguaya,

DNI / Pasaporte 94180335, con domicilio en la calle 31 Bis 71 Casa 88.

En este acto, declaro:

Autorizar el uso de mi imagen y testimonios en la OBRA AUDIOVISUAL titulada
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Firma del Autorizante

Angelina Aguilera

Aclaración

Angelina Aguilera

Lugar y Fecha

Ciudad Autónoma de Bs. As., 30 de Marzo de 2017

En caso de menores de edad completar los siguientes datos:

Firma del Padre o Madre/Tutor

Aclaración

Documento

ATENAS OVIEDO, 14/03/2017



82. Interview with Atenas Oviedo, Elena Parnisari.

Name, nationality, profession.

I am Atenas, of Argentine nationality and I am a student of public relations.

How long have you lived in Buenos Aires and in which neighbourhood do you live?

I have lived in Buenos Aires for three years now and I live in the neighbourhood of Almagro.

What is a public space for you?

A public space is a place where anyone can access, regardless of where he is from, from which neighbourhood and country. A public space has public access for the simple fact that you do not have to pay to enter.

Which would be a word to describe Buenos Aires? Which are the positive and the negative aspects of the city?

One word to describe Buenos Aires would be “big”. It is a very huge city, with many people, lots of capacity and many different activities. A good thing about Buenos Aires is that it has many green spaces

that I like a lot, but also the bad thing would be the opposite, it has many buildings and there are areas that are very over constructed with too many buildings and I think that this is not very comfortable for me.

What do you know about Villa 31? Of its history and of its actuality?

Villa 31 is a settlement where many people live, I know there are many nationalities living there. It is a mini-city within Buenos Aires. Seen from the outside for me Villa 31 is something dangerous and where I would not enter.

How do you see the future of Villa 31?

About the future of Villa 31 in Buenos Aires I do not know, I never thought about it. But I think that if nobody acts in that place, the future will be more and more complicated for the people who live there because they are people who may not work, or they do not have good jobs, or they do not study or they have very low resources, so it's like they are looking for alternatives to life that are not good for the society, maybe like going out to steal or things like that.

How do you imagine a public space in Villa 31?

Maybe a new public space in Villa 31 would be good for the people that grow up there, that were born there, for the children. But I think that the people from outside will not go there, to enjoy this new public space inside the *villa*, because of what people from outside think about Villa 31.

How would you call a new public space in Villa 31?

La plaza 31, The Square 31.

AUTORIZACIÓN DE USO DE DERECHOS DE IMAGEN Y CONTENIDOS

A los 14 días del mes de MARZO de 2017.

Yo ATENTAS OUIEDO, nacionalidad ARGENTINA,

DNI / Pasaporte 3401678, con domicilio en la calle J. SALGUERO 677.

En este acto, declaro:

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Maestría en Planificación y Diseño Urbano de la Universidad de Porto, Portugal.

Firma del Autorizante

Aclaración

OUIEDO ATENDS

Lugar y Fecha

CABA, BS AS. ARG.

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Firma del Padre o Madre/Tutor

Aclaración

Documento

CÉSAR MOLAS, 16/03/2017



83. Interview with César Armando Molas, Elena Parnisari.

Name, nationality, profession.

My name is César Molas, I am Paraguayan and I am a teacher.

How long have you lived in Buenos Aires and in which neighbourhood do you live?

In Buenos Aires, I've lived for a year. I started living in Liniers for 4 months and then I moved to Villa 31; I've been living in Villa 31 for 10 months.

What is a public space for you?

A public space for me is a space where all the people of the neighbourhood can access.

Which would be a word to describe Buenos Aires? Which are the positive and the negative aspects of the city?

Buenos Aires, I can describe it with the word "order". The good thing I found as I said is a lot of order, a lot of signage; it is very easy to get around, to perform and to mobilize. The downside is where I found discrimination against immigrants.

What do you know about Villa 31? Of its history and of its actuality?

About Villa 31 what I know, from what I was told is that it is one of the first *villas* that started in the 1930s, and the first inhabitants, at least for what they told me were immigrants from neighbouring countries, specifically from Paraguay and Bolivia.

What does Villa 31 represent for you in one word?

Villa 31 represents for me a space where solidarity is practiced at a very high level, a space of opportunity. There are many good people who are living here and are contributing to the development of the country.

What do you think is missing in Villa 31?

What is missing in Villa 31...a lot of things are missing, basic service provision is lacking, a database where you can detail how many people are living there and under what conditions is missing.

How do you imagine a public space in Villa 31?

For a public space in Villa 31, I imagine a space where children, young people, adults and elderly people can develop themselves; I see very few elderly people in public spaces, so I would like a space where there is more opportunity for the elderly.

How would you call a new public space in Villa 31?

La plaza del barrio, The square of the neighbourhood.

AUTORIZACIÓN DE USO DE DERECHOS DE IMAGEN Y CONTENIDOS

A los 16 días del mes de marzo de 2017.

Yo César Armando Molas, nacionalidad Paraguaya,

DNI / Pasaporte 95.613.601, con domicilio en la calle Manzana 4 casa 21.

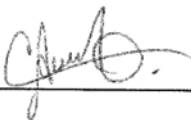
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Firma del Autorizante



Aclaración

César Molas

Lugar y Fecha

Villa 31

En caso de menores de edad completar los siguientes datos:

Firma del Padre o Madre/Tutor

Aclaración

Documento

ELSA MÉNDEZ, 30/03/2017



84. Interview with Elsa Amada Méndez, Elena Parnisari.

Name, nationality, profession.

My name is Elsa Méndez, I come from Paraguay, and I studied nursing there, but here in Buenos Aires I serve as a butcher and a grocer.

How long have you lived in Buenos Aires and in which neighbourhood do you live?

I've been here for 6 years. I lived a year or so in the province and then I moved to the *villa*.

What is a public space for you?

It would be where the kids play, it would be where one can stay to share, to talk, to chat...a space to be, to think, to eat, to share with friends.

Which would be a word to describe Buenos Aires? Which are the positive and the negative aspects of the city?

A word would be “welcoming”; Buenos Aires has given to me a lot, because in my country I studied, but I didn't have a lot of possibilities, so I came here to try and the truth is that I cannot complain. Bad

things...many things are told, there is a lot of insecurity, but for me, for example, if you know how to handle with the times, the truth is that nothing happens to you. What one seeks, finds, as it is said. For me, as far as I'm concerned, Buenos Aires gave me a lot.

What do you know about Villa 31? Of its history and of its actuality?

I know that people protested a lot, the truth is that about its history I don't know anything, I did not ask. What I can talk about is what I am seeing, that they are improving a lot.

What do you think is missing in Villa 31?

More squares. There are too many kids and they do not have enough spaces to be; then a couple of squares more and green places would be good.

How would you call a new public space in Villa 31?

Un espacio público, A public space.

AUTORIZACIÓN DE USO DE DERECHOS DE IMAGEN Y CONTENIDOS

A los 30 días del mes de marzo de 2017.

Yo Elsa Amada Méndez, nacionalidad Paraguay,

DNI / Pasaporte 94.735680, con domicilio en la calle Mza. II Casa 90.

En este acto, declaro:

Autorizar el uso de mi imagen y testimonios en la OBRA AUDIOVISUAL titulada
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Maestría en Planificación y Diseño Urbano de la Universidad de Porto, Portugal.

Firma del Autorizante Elsa Amada Méndez

Aclaración Elsa Amada Méndez

Lugar y Fecha BsAs. 30 de Marzo

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Firma del Padre o Madre/Tutor _____

Aclaración _____

Documento _____

ESTEBAN PAIVA, 16/03/2017



85. Interview with Esteban Paiva Samudio, Elena Parnisari.

Name, nationality, profession.

My name is Esteban Paiva, of Paraguay, and by profession I am a builder.

How long have you lived in Buenos Aires and in which neighbourhood do you live?

In Buenos Aires, I have lived for 15 years, here in the *villa* for 10 years.

What is a public space for you?

A public space for me is a space where everyone can go to have a good time, recreate and have fun.

Which would be a word to describe Buenos Aires? Which are the positive and the negative aspects of the city?

Buenos Aires for me is a city of many opportunities in two directions: for good and for bad.

What do you know about Villa 31? Of its history and of its actuality?

About Villa 31, regarding its history I almost know nothing, nowadays I know that it is improving and it has been start thinking about its urbanization.

What does Villa 31 represent for you in one word?

For me now it represents that it is already my neighbourhood, that I live here and that from here I can go everywhere.

What do you think is missing in Villa 31?

For me in Villa 31 are missing many things, especially for the most precarious people.

How do you imagine a public space in Villa 31?

In Villa 31 a public space for me would be a place where to have a good time, it would need something good in a very small space, it would be something nice and very beautiful.

How would you call a new public space in Villa 31?

Un espacio de encuentro, A meeting space.

AUTORIZACIÓN DE USO DE DERECHOS DE IMAGEN Y CONTENIDOS

A los 16 días del mes de MARZO de 2017.

Yo Esteban Paiva samudia nacionalidad Paraguay,

DNI / Pasaporte 94656803, con domicilio en la calle Villa 31 4217. Mo. 4

En este acto, declaro:

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ESP

Aclaración

Esteban Paiva

Lugar y Fecha

En caso de menores de edad completar los siguientes datos:

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Aclaración

Documento

GUILLERMO CRISTOFANI, 29/03/2017



86. Interview with Guillermo Cristofani, Elena Parnisari.

Name, nationality, profession.

My name is Guillermo Cristofani, I am Argentinian and I am an architect.

How long have you lived in Buenos Aires and in which neighbourhood do you live?

I've lived in Buenos Aires for 40 years, I started living in the neighbourhood Villa Devoto, and then I moved to Palermo.

What is a public space for you?

For me, a public space is a space where you can share, socialize, exchange between the different actors that make up the city, with the freedom to express yourself freely.

Which would be a word to describe Buenos Aires? Which are the positive and the negative aspects of the city?

A word to describe Buenos Aires, now what comes to my mind is "green", but it's because I live in front of the botanical garden. Its positive aspect could be that it is a welcoming city that harbours movement

and desire for activity, but the negative is that there is little socialization in the city between the inhabitants and among who is living outside of the city.

What do you know about Villa 31? Of its history and of its actuality?

I began to know the history of Villa 31 when I began to work with my postgraduate studies. I know that it is a neighbourhood that began to formalize in the 1940s and 1950s, when the first wave of poverty began, and it grew in the 1970s. But then during the military dictatorship, there was a strong disaffection promoted by the government, that was called the eradication of *villas* and the number of the population was reduced to a significant value. I do not remember figures and numbers but it ended up being a very small population that then began to deal with the different economic processes that Argentina was living, it began to expand, and this growth began to formalize and began to generate a neighbourhood, which nevertheless has different connotations with its surroundings...and I have to clarify that I say neighbourhood because the population that live there; also teaches you to say “barrio”. Villa 31 began to deal with different aspects, to integrate within the city. Today from the struggles and the union of organizations and interests of the population, the political interests are trying to urbanize it and trying to generate a space in continuity with the city.

How do you imagine a public space in Villa 31?

A new public space in Villa 31...I imagine it as all the spaces; it does not have to be different. The interesting thing is that it must have the same characteristics that I said before, where one can congregate, can express and can coexist and share with all other citizens.

How would you call a new public space in Villa 31?

Un espacio público como todos, A public space like all the others.

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A los 28 días del mes de MAZO de 2017.

Yo GUILLERMO CRISTIAN, nacionalidad ARGENTINO,

DNI / Pasaporte 20.226106 con domicilio en la calle SANTA FE 3842.

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Firma del Autorizante

Aclaración

GUILLERMO CRISTIAN

Lugar y Fecha

28 MARZO 2017, Bs As

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Aclaración

Documento

GUSTAVO CAPRI AND HIS GIRLFRIEND CLAUDIA, 30/03/2017



87. Interview with Gustavo Capri and Claudia, Elena Parnisari.

Name, nationality, profession.

My name is Gustavo, I am Argentinian and for the moment I am unemployed, but I'm looking for a job every day.

My name is Claudia, I take care of 4 children, and one more here next to me.

How long have you lived in Buenos Aires and in which neighbourhood do you live?

G_ I live in Buenos Aires since I was born, I was born in the neighbourhood Parque Patricios and I never left the country. Now I live in Villa 31, but I am from Capital Federal, I am *Pompeyo*.

C_ I'm from Paraguay, I've been here for 20 years, I've never left the country.

What is a public space for you?

G_ For me a public space is a space where everyone can recreate, and where everyone has the right to be and to be able to occupy the space; that's why it's a public space, public means that it belongs to everyone.

Which would be a word to describe Buenos Aires? Which are the positive and the negative aspects of the city?

G_ Buenos Aires is beautiful wherever you see it, but a bad aspect would be that you need help to do what would be good for the city.

C_ There are more good things than bad, what I see is that Argentina helps a lot the people, this is what I see.

What do you know about Villa 31? Of its history and of its actuality?

G_ What I know of Villa 31 is that it was very small, that Father Carlos Múgica came to this place; he fought for the people; because the most important was that the people had their home. Step by step with fights and struggling against the government itself, it happened that the Triple A murdered him, but the good thing about this is that he left a legacy. Today the *villa* grows every time more and more. Today there are improvements so that it can be urbanized and we can be part of the city because we are all people.

C_ People discriminate us a lot because we are from the *villa*, and we are working hard on this issue. Today we are working on this because people discriminate us a lot - "no, because he is from the Villa ..." - many times they do not hire you to work.

What does Villa 31 represent for you in one word?

G_ For me this neighbourhood represents mainly the fight for housing, which is something that was the legacy left by Múgica. Beyond the crime and the drug trafficker, I think the neighbourhood always tries to get ahead and each one does his part so that this can change.

C_ The neighbours put their hands to improve the *villa*.

What do you think is missing in Villa 31?

G_ In this neighbourhood above all I think there are more complex problems, and this is what is missing. As I was telling you about the drug traffickers...I think there would be a lot of social help that I know

there is, but I think it's not enough. Kids today at two years old are talking with words that, in my time, I am 30 years old, you wouldn't hear, and I think more social help is needed. Above all I think the main thing would be social help and then go arming other types of projects.

C_ There is needed more help for the kids, for the kids with the drugs. There are many kids who need to be helped.

How do you imagine a public space in Villa 31?

G_ I think that mainly it would be very good to start looking for the guys who are really lying in the containers, that every day you see them in the street, not only in the *villa* but also outside the *villa*. As there was in a moment Bap, who I never saw again, who at one time was working here, who had a concern for the people who were in the street. And the truth is that I think we should put a little more effort, we want to do something more like I said before, something more complex. A social development to start, with the young people more than anything...start with the youngest, because as we all know a problem cannot be solved starting from the oldest, maybe there will not be a solution, but an improvement...for the kids, so that they can have education, they can go seeing, having workshops, having companions all the time and that they really can have the capacity that I think they have to see that there is a different life with efforts and sacrifices.

C_ A public space that is a voluntary action.

How would you call a new public space in Villa 31?

Un desarrollo social para los chicos, A social development for children.

AUTORIZACIÓN DE USO DE DERECHOS DE IMAGEN Y CONTENIDOS

A los 30 días del mes de MARZO de 2017.

Yo GUSTAVO J. CAPRÉ, nacionalidad ARGENTINO,

DNI / Pasaporte 33019322 con domicilio en la calle MANZANA 14 ES 44

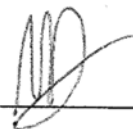
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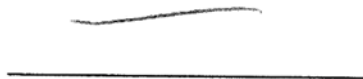
GUSTAVO J. CAPRÉ

Lugar y Fecha

BUENOS AIRES 30 DE MARZO

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Firma del Padre o Madre/Tutor



Aclaración



Documento



JUAN ESTEBAN BALESTRETTI, 13/03/2017



88. Interview with Juan Esteban Balestretti, Elena Parnisari.

Name, nationality, profession.

I am Juan Esteban Balestretti, I am Argentinian and I am a student.

How long have you lived in Buenos Aires and in which neighbourhood do you live?

I live in Buenos Aires since I was born. I am from the neighbourhood Barrio Norte, Recoleta.

What is a public space for you?

For me a public space is a place where you can spend your free time with friends or family. It is a space that must be free of pollution.

Which would be a word to describe Buenos Aires? Which are the positive and the negative aspects of the city?

For me Buenos Aires is a magical and incredible city. The good thing is, well if you like to go out at night, it is a very good place to do it. And bad things I would say...the only thing can be the insecurity, today there is insecurity in almost all neighbourhoods.

What do you know about Villa 31? Of its history and of its actuality?

I do not know anything about Villa 31, particularly of its history, but for work I had to go there a few times. For me this *villa* must be urbanized.

How do you see the future of Villa 31?

From my point of view Villa 31 could be considered as a neighbourhood, but it would have to be urbanized to make it safer for all the people who live there, because right now there is no planning in the construction of the houses.

How do you imagine a new public space in the city of Buenos Aires? What does the city need?

I play basketball, so I think that the city is missing more basketball courts.

Would you make the same proposal for Villa 31 as well?

Yes, why not.

How would you call a new public space in Villa 31?

Polideportivo 31, Sports Centre 31.

AUTORIZACIÓN DE USO DE DERECHOS DE IMAGEN Y CONTENIDOS

A los 13 días del mes de marzo de 2017.

Yo Juan Esteban Balabrethi, nacionalidad Argentina,

DNI / Pasaporte 36949526, con domicilio en la calle Aguero.

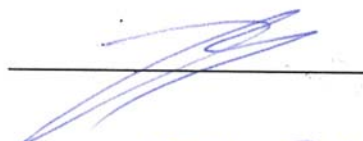
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Firma del Autorizante



Aclaración

Juan Esteban Balabrethi

Lugar y Fecha

Buenos Aires, CABA 13/03/17

En caso de menores de edad completar los siguientes datos:

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Aclaración

Documento

LAURA MILAN, 25/03/2017



89. Interview with Laura Milan Candido, Elena Parnisari.

Name, nationality, profession.

My name is Laura Milan, I'm from Brazil, I'm 30 years old, and I'm an architect.

How long have you lived in Buenos Aires and in which neighbourhood do you live?

I've lived in Buenos Aires for 1 year, I live in the neighbourhood of Caballito.

What is a public space for you?

For me a public space is a common space for all the people who live in the city.

Which would be a word to describe Buenos Aires? Which are the positive and the negative aspects of the city?

For me Buenos Aires is culture. A good thing about Buenos Aires is the weather, but I don't like it in summer, but all the rest of the year for me is good. I like the cultural life it has, how the public spaces work it seems good to me. It is very different from Brazil, here it seems to me that people use them

more. And a bad thing about Buenos Aires is that I think that sometimes people are very close between them, and that for me, coming from Brazil, is a very big difference.

What do you know about Villa 31? Of its history and of its actuality?

I know Villa 31 because it is in my area of study, I am an architect and throughout my professional life in Brazil I worked with the *favelas* of Brazil, and here in Buenos Aires I study this subject. So, I do not know a lot about the history of the *villa*, but I've visited it twice, I've been there a few times, I met the people. It seems to me that, compared with the *favelas* with which I worked in Rio, it is a slum with a lot of structure, infrastructure and it struck me when I visited it, it's very large and flat. That is very different also from the *favelas* of Rio once they are located on the hills. So, what I know and what strikes me is the infrastructure that it has.

How do you see the future of Villa 31?

About the future of Villa 31 in the city of Buenos Aires...since the *villa* is in a central part of the city, I believe that the process of gentrification seems inevitable, since it is a central area and with the whole process of the police that entered there, in theory is safer. It seems to me that more people try to live there for being cheaper, but after the urbanization I believe that people will slowly leave Villa 31 because it will become more expensive to live there. People who were originally living there will not be able to stay there any longer.

How do you imagine a public space in Villa 31?

I believe that the future public spaces must be combined spaces. I do not know if I can use this word, but with it I mean spaces that call the person inside and spaces that are pleasant, spaces made for the people who live there. With its characteristics, with its personality and pleasant spaces with trees, vegetation and things like that, so that it is a pleasant space to stay, not only a space with colours like the government does normally, I think that it lacks the personality of the person who lives there.

How would you call a new public space in Villa 31?

La plaza de los otros, The square of the others.

AUTORIZACIÓN DE USO DE DERECHOS DE IMAGEN Y CONTENIDOS

A los 25 días del mes de MARZO de 2017.

Yo LAURA MILAN CANDIDO, nacionalidad BRASILEÑA,

DNI / Pasaporte F0605392, con domicilio en la calle AMBROSETTI 221, CABBALLITO, CABA

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Firma del Autorizante

Laura Milan Candido

Aclaración

LAURA MILAN CANDIDO

Lugar y Fecha

BUENOS AIRES, 24 DE MARZO DE 2017.

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Aclaración

Documento

LOURDES VILLALBA, 24/03/2017



90. Interview with Lourdes Rocio Villalba, Elena Parnisari.

Name, nationality, profession.

I am Lourdes Villalba, I am from Paraguay, and I am a student.

How long have you lived in Buenos Aires and in which neighbourhood do you live?

I came here 5 years ago, to live here in Buenos Aires, and I live here in Retiro, in Villa 31.

What is a public space for you?

It is a place that we can all share.

Which would be a word to describe Buenos Aires? Which are the positive and the negative aspects of the city?

It is a very big city with a lot of inhabitants; it is very pretty.

What do you know about Villa 31? Of its history and of its actuality?

I almost do not know anything, but what I do know is that Father Múgica was who started with the neighbourhood; he was one of the first to work for the formation of Villa 31.

What does Villa 31 represent for you in one word?

It is my place, my house, where I live, with the good and the bad aspects, but it is the place where I live.

What do you think is missing in Villa 31?

There is a need of more security and help. Public spaces are missing because there are very few of them, and the few that exist are very small. I think there are many inhabitants, and that there should be more places for people to go out and share.

How do you imagine a public space in Villa 31?

A place where we can all get together, a place that we can share, that is a space of the whole neighbourhood, a place where we know that we can go and be with the neighbours.

How would you call a new public space in Villa 31?

Un mundo diferente, A different world.

AUTORIZACIÓN DE USO DE DERECHOS DE IMAGEN Y CONTENIDOS

A los 24 días del mes de Marzo de 2017.

Yo Lourdes Rocio Villalba, nacionalidad Paraguay,

DNI / Pasaporte 95191717, con domicilio en la calle Mz 21 Casa 53


En este acto, declaro:

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Aclaración

Lourdes Villalba

Lugar y Fecha

Buenos Aires 24/03/17

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Firma del Padre o Madre/Tutor

Aclaración

Documento

MATHILDE ROUX, 13/03/2017



91. Interview with Mathilde Roux, Elena Parnisari.

Name, nationality, profession.

I'm Mathilde, I'm French and I'm in exchange to study architecture in Buenos Aires.

How long have you lived in Buenos Aires and in which neighbourhood do you live?

I live in Buenos Aires since July 2016, so I have been here for 8 months, and I am living in the neighbourhood of Almagro.

What is a public space for you?

For me a public space is a space where different uses are made, it is a place where people can interpret the place and experience their way of living.

Which would be a word to describe Buenos Aires? What has the city of good and bad?

For me Buenos Aires is a city of mixture, of different ways of life, of different people and nationalities. It is a country of immigration, and you feel that in the architecture, in the street, in the way of living, in the words, in the surnames of the people.

What do you know about Villa 31? Of its history and of its actuality?

I know it is the largest *villa* in Buenos Aires, and it is near Retiro. I cannot go through Retiro without seeing it. It's the oldest too, there are a lot of people who live there, and now it's been a while that there are organizations doing things there, like Techo.

Which would be a word to describe Villa 31?

For me Villa 31 is like a big ghetto, that the people of Buenos Aires wants to get out of their life, and they do not want to think about this, but Villa 31 is here, it is in the middle of the city and is part of the city.

How do you imagine a public space in Villa 31?

For me the whole *villa* is a public space, because as they are informal houses, in the end it is like all the people, the friends and the families that are making a house, work all together and participate to the evolution of the space. So, in the end the whole *villa* for me is a public space, where the people meet each other on the roof, on the terrace and on the street. There are no formal levels in the *villa*, as in the formal city that we know.

How would you call a new public space in Villa 31?

Juntarnos, Get together.

AUTORIZACIÓN DE USO DE DERECHOS DE IMAGEN Y CONTENIDOS

A los 13 días del mes de marzo de 2017.

Yo Mathilde Roux, nacionalidad francesa,

DNI / Pasaporte 16A222023, con domicilio en la calle huáquina.

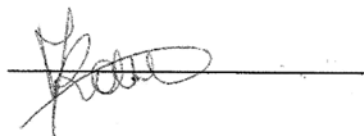
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Firma del Autorizante



Aclaración

Mathilde Roux

Lugar y Fecha

Buenos Aires, Lunes 13 de marzo 2017

En caso de menores de edad completar los siguientes datos:

Firma del Padre o Madre/Tutor

Aclaración

Documento

TERESA BARRETO, 16/03/2017



92. Interview with Teresa Liliana Barreto Villalba, Elena Parnisari.

Name, nationality, profession.

I am Teresa Liliana, I am Paraguayan, I am an administrative employee.

How long have you lived in Buenos Aires and in which neighbourhood do you live?

I've lived in Buenos Aires for 17 years; I've been living in the *villa* for 8 years, I live in the block 4, house 28.

What is a public space for you?

A public space is a place where we can all share and we can all use.

Which would be a word to describe Buenos Aires? Which are the positive and the negative aspects of the city?

Buenos Aires, I believe that, to many of us, it gives many opportunities, if you take advantage of them to do good things, and it is also a place of opportunity for people who come to do bad things, of course.

What do you know about Villa 31? Of its history and of its actuality?

Of the history, much I do not know...I know that in the '70s it already existed. At one time, there was a priest who is Father Carlos Múgica, who helped a lot the people of the neighbourhood, and what's more, he was murdered to help the poor people, and his main task was here in Villa 31, here in the neighbourhood, and his remains are now resting in the parish here in the *villa*. Also in these last 10 years, or less, I have been here for 8 years, when I entered it was not like this...it grew much more, in the last 5 years it grew much more, in population, in buildings, in all the senses.

What does Villa 31 represent for you in one word?

Many things, I think in a word you cannot describe it, at least I cannot. For many it is the place where you live, it is your home, your house, your family with which you share; for others it is a shelter to hide, and for some outside people is the place where the marginalized take refuge.

What do you think is missing in Villa 31?

There is a lack of a good urbanization project, and if the project exists it must really comply with the project, and really give housing to those who really need them, and not just favour a few.

Is there a lack of public spaces?

A lot is missing. There are no public spaces to share, for the kids. There are some sport courts, but they are not enough. There is not a good square, and if it is done a few days later it is disarmed, and the kids cannot go because there is no safety; those places are filled with people who shouldn't be there, the kids cannot go there because the parents are afraid to leave them there. It is necessary to put energy in the part of the public spaces and to see that they are really used as it should be.

How do you imagine a public space in Villa 31?

There would have to be more recreation spaces for kids and for all types of people, for all the communities themselves, not just for children, or just soccer fields for adult males, which women use very little. I think it would have to be something more related with the whole community and not just for one and not for the others.

How would you call a new public space in Villa 31?

Espacio comunitario, Community space.

AUTORIZACIÓN DE USO DE DERECHOS DE IMAGEN Y CONTENIDOS

A los 16 días del mes de mayo de 2017.

Yo BARRETO VILLALBA TERESA LILIANA nacionalidad PARAGUAYA,

DNI / Pasaporte 94039535, con domicilio en la calle MADEANA 4 CASA 20.

En este acto, declaro:

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Se deja constancia que dicha OBRA es producida en el marco de entrenamiento a la producción audiovisual a cargo de la estudiante Elena Parnisari para la Tesis de Maestría en Planificación y Diseño Urbano de la Universidad de Porto, Portugal.

Firma del Autorizante

[Firma manuscrita]

Aclaración

BARRETO TERESA

Lugar y Fecha

C.A.B.A. Villa 31 bis

16-03-2017

En caso de menores de edad completar los siguientes datos:

Firma del Padre o Madre/Tutor

Aclaración

Documento

CURRICULUM VITAE

Elena Parnisari was born in Omegna, Italy on the 5th of October of 1992.

She got her diploma in 2011 at the scientific high school Enrico Fermi in Arona, Italy.

She followed her father's footsteps to Politecnico of Milan, Italy, where she obtained the bachelor degree in architecture in 2015, after a year spent at the Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias in Lisbon, Portugal for the Erasmus program.

In 2015, she started the master degree in spatial planning and urban project at Universidade do Porto, Portugal, where she graduates in 2017 with her final project, developed at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina, during an exchange program.

During her studies, she worked for PROAP, the landscape architecture studio of João Nunes in Lisbon, and for the interior design architecture studio of Cini Boeri in Milan.

She started to be interested in the topic of slums, during her travels in South America, she was fascinated by the Brazilian and Argentine realities that attracted her attention to this very complex social issue.

She now looks forward to work with the issues of freedom to build public spaces for people and by people.

